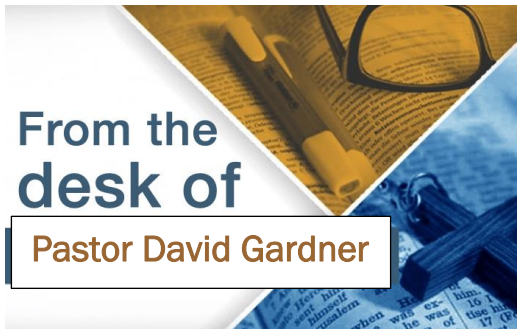




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Spumcduncan.com
FB@stpaulsumcduncan
stpaulsduncan@gmail.com



Many, many times, something important is introduced in the Bible - and it isn't with blowing of trumpets and great fanfare. Here is Genesis 4:26b (The Voice):

“This was *about the time* when people began to *worship and* call on the name of the Eternal One.”

Public worship and prayer start with Adam and Eve's grandchildren... (now we know that there was dialogue between God and Adam and Eve - and interestingly, all of this is initiated by God. There were universal implications for those conversations, but it wasn't 'calling on the name.')

Larry Culliford wrote a great piece in Psychology Today entitled, “What is Prayer?” I have condensed it greatly:

Most people pray. Even atheists may pray ... or at least curse. Because, to invoke a higher power in any way at all represents some form of prayer.

There are different types of prayer. The best-known might be 'petition', when we ask for something. The question I want to touch on first is, 'Who are we asking?' The 'higher power' I have already mentioned is, of course, often called 'God'. The thing is, what do each of us know about God? To what extent is each person spiritually aware, conscious of any profound and meaningful relationship with the divine, with God as the Christian Trinity, as the Great Spirit of the Universe, or in some other formulation? These questions raise the concept of spiritual maturity. How do we become increasingly spiritually mature?

One way is through regular and disciplined prayer.

So, it is kind of circular... To get to know the God you pray to, you have to pray consistently to God. Asking for things that are unlikely to happen, may not be the best way to start.

One of the keys to prayer is repetition. Learn a short prayer and repeat it over and over. 'Our Father...', 'Hail Mary...', 'Lord have mercy...' These are Christian prayers which people use and repeat many, many times.

To the uninitiated, it can seem rather dull and pointless. Even more dull and pointless may seem the practice of silent prayer or 'meditation'. Let us try and understand what is happening.

During silent prayer we keep our bodies relatively still, surrounding ourselves with silence. This allows our minds to quieten and focus inwardly, to 'simply be'. Other methods - the repetitive use of a word or phrase (a 'mantra'), chanting, and other forms of meditation - similarly encourage this focusing of awareness, which is all-important. At first there are distractions, but eventually it is a peaceful experience.

The truth is that something really happens during silent prayer. At the biological level, our brain waves change and the two sides of our brain - the verbal, ego-driven, rational, materialistic left hemisphere and the silent, altruistic, poetic, intuitive right hemisphere - communicate more harmoniously. Emotional blockages are gradually worn away, promoting protection from anxiety, healing from loss, and growth towards joy and inner peace.

There may be a sudden breakthrough, but the process is more often gradual, perhaps almost imperceptible, which is why perseverance in the practice is advised.

Gradually, attuning ourselves to the infinite, we come to experience something majestic and divine at work in our universe, and a deep sense of being cared for and loved. We become aware too of a great kinship with each other, with the entirety of humanity without discrimination, and also with our planet and the magnificent realm of nature. There are no barriers to these seamless connections between God, people and creation. You can think this intellectually, but it can only become a truly real, lived experience through the kind of spiritual awareness that is derived from contemplation, prayer and other forms of spiritual practice.

For a listing of types of verbal prayers, Culliford cites For God Alone, by Christian writer Bonnie Thurston:

Invocation: this means ‘to call upon’, or perhaps rather to recognize the constant presence of the divine, reminding us to pay attention inwardly to that presence.

Confession and penitence: involve recognizing that we hold a harmful attitude or have made a destructive mistake – actively or through neglect – while aiming deliberately to atone and amend our ways in the future.

Adoration and praise: this is worship (‘worth-ship’) plain and simple, the spontaneous utterance of deep love and respect for a God whose mercy and majesty we have experienced directly.

Thanksgiving: is similarly called naturally forth from deep within on truly humble recognition and appreciation of the great gift of life bestowed upon us, and the many individual blessings we receive.

Petition and intercession: Petition is when we ask God for something for ourselves. Intercession is when we ask something for others. Both types recognize human weaknesses and limitations.

Lamentation: is the expression of grief and sorrow in the face of great danger and threat and following losses such as bereavement. There may be anger, too, in the mix of emotions. This is a natural and healthy response, but grieving is not a static outcome. It is a process in which the pain often acts as the medicine. The difficult emotions need to be experienced and allowed to play out as they gradually weaken while we heal. Sorrow transforms into joy. Anxiety mutates softly into harmony and peace. Prayers of lamentation imply a readiness eventually to accept the inevitability of loss as part of natural law and God’s will.

Oblation: is not only about recognizing gifts and blessings, but also about feeling a need to give something back – to God, to other people, and to Creation, nature. It is about dedicating one’s life in the sacred service of others.

Jesus ends His longest prayer, found in John 17, with this:

22 All the glory You have given to Me, I pass on to them. May that glory unify them and make them one as We are one, **23** I in them and You in Me, that they may be refined so that all will know that You sent Me, and You love them in the same way You love Me.

24 Father, I long for the time when those You have given Me can join Me in My place so they may witness My glory, which comes from You. You have loved Me before the foundations of the cosmos were laid. **25** Father, You are just; though this corrupt world order does not know You, I do. These followers know that You have sent Me. **26** I have told them about Your nature; and I will continue to speak of Your name in order that Your love, which was poured out on Me, will be in them. And I will also be in them.

PRAISE BE TO GOD! AMEN





I·M·P·O·R·T·A·N·T

Announcements

Are you interested in helping with the Audio/Visual on Sunday mornings, but you have no idea where to start... this is for you? Workshops are being offered and we would like to send someone to training and in return you can help train others. Here is the link to the workshops. <https://www.churchsoundbootcamp.com>. If you are interested in attending the training in Tulsa or Dallas please contact the office.

We have extended Souper Bowl Sunday through Feb. 10th. Please bring soups and put on the Alter to donate to Christians Concerned.

The Toy shop is having a fundraiser Spud Lunch on March 5th from 11am to 1:30 pm. It will be held at First UMC. Tickets are \$8 each. Please contact Pat Weber for tickets. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

DHS Student Lunch will be Feb. 20th from 11:15 am – 1 pm.

UMW will meet Feb 21st at 6 pm.

A Fitbit watch was found by the restrooms in the hallway. Please contact the office if it's yours.

Have you seen our new online giving program? We're excited about the new things happening at Saint Paul's through our online community. You can securely give from our website at spumcduncan.com and via text message by messaging "walkthetalk" to 73256. You can even set up recurring donations. If you need help with this just contact the office.

We now have a Calendar in the Copy Room for you to put upcoming Events/Church activities on and to see when the church is Reserved for special occasions. Thank you.

Men's Emmaus Walk will be Feb. 21-24. Women's Emmaus will be Feb 28-Mar.3.

For King and Country will be in Concert in Wichita Falls on April 11th at 7 pm. Contact the office if you are interested in going.



February

- 12 – Addie McMurrin
- 22 – Alyssa Rue
- 27 – Carla Johnson
- 28 – Joe Henson



SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY



February 10th, 2019



We are asking everyone to bring several cans of soup and place them on the Altar to be taken to Christian's Concerned.





Louise Goldens sister is moving here
Donna got moved out of Mobile Home
Jana survived her student's escape Room
Kevin B. has a new business



Martha Burger – Loss of her husband Bud
Junior Brown – Stroke and Clots in his Lung
Our Nation and new laws in New York
Billy Branch – Travel Mercies
Stacy Mettler – Cancer – Surgery Complications
Ann Johnson – Recovering from Hip Surgery
Oleta Little – On Hospice. Brain Cancer
returned
Addie McMurrin
Parker Bowles – Continued Growth
Sara Riggs – Still going through Divorce

Lisa Berscheidt – going to Retreat
Ross Pipkin – Basic Training
Lorie DeBowka – travel mercies for her and her son going back to Canada
Dave and Margie Robertson
Marcia's circumstances dealing with health, surgery, housing and work
Jason Poorman – (Edith Suiters nephew) chemo for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
Addie's friend and relative on Hospice. Peace in her Family
Kathy Allred – Continued prayers for healing
Trish Lister
Lisa Hill – loss of her mom
Jim and Edith Suiter – Jim is getting increasingly weary
Courtney - The Allred's 11 yr. old grandchild with neurological issues.
Karen Gibson – Cancer
Gary Gibson – Cancer
Jan Smith – Cancer
Jennifer Shahan – Heart Problems
Iva Johnson – Hospice
Karen Stanfill – Cancer
Rebecca's cousin has eating disorder, liver failure and on transplant list
Kathy Bridges – Cancer
Joe Perry – Kidney cancer
Margaret Averre – Throat cancer
Daniel Whittney – Colon cancer; now liver cancer
Jennifer Allred – Spinal pain and fibromyalgia
Melinda Douglas – Lung Cancer