

Thought For The Week

Scriptures:

Isaiah 55:1-3 • Romans 8: 35-37-39 • Mathew 14: 13-31



Many of you faithfully attend weekly services at your church of choice each Sunday.

And just as often, after the minister has finished his sermon and invited us to join him in prayer, we often consider the list of needs that concern the world, the Church and each of our member-friends. Quite often, many of the needs of people we know (sometimes intimately) are left unsaid by us and by others.

This begs the question, does God give more attention to 10 prayers for a cause than He does for just one prayer for that same cause?

I don't know, but I do know that the praying for others helps those that pray as much, if not more, than the cause that is the subject of the prayers. Praying for others exemplifies our Faith in God.

Some while back it occurred to me that the structure of this method of common prayer does not make any sense, the reason being that we repeatedly ask God to do one thing or another, but we seldom suggest that there is anything that we, the members of the church, could do to make the load a bit lighter for God.

At the end of our prayers we seldom add: "We promise to do all we can to address this or that world situation whether in war, poverty, sexual abuse, kidnapping of children and other continuing world tragedies.

In other words, we do not tend to take it upon ourselves to make these causes our personal cause.

Interestingly enough, the scriptures seem to support the attitude that God will take care of everything; we the Christian faithful can just sit back, pray and observe what will happen.

In the scripture lesson from the prophet Isaiah we hear him promise the people in exile:

"All you who are thirsty, come to the water; you who have no money, come, receive grain and eat.

Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare...

I will renew with you the everlasting covenant, the benefits assured to David."

Historically, however, it did not happen quite that simply.

In the 6th century B.C. Cyrus the king of Persia and a benevolent dictator, initiated the release of the Jewish people from captivity in the Babylonian empire.

The point being that God acted not on His own but through the instrumentality of a foreign king to restore Israel to its ancient roots.

The gospel relates a similar situation.

A crowd of faithful people had come out to a remote area to hear Jesus preach.

By the end of the day, they were tired and hungry with nothing to eat and far from home.

At this point, Jesus, in all compassion, performs the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves & fish.

But that is not the conclusion of the story:

The distribution of the bread & fish was carried out by Jesus' disciples, lay men and women.

In other words, Jesus provided the bread but expected others to organize and distribute the food.

Thus, we have an example of collaboration between the divine and the human. God provides the material sustenance but we are expected to carry out the details of its distribution.

It occurs to me that this joint collaborative effort between the divine and the human can easily be discovered in our own time.

Let me give you just one example: let's assume first, for instance, that God provides the natural resources for satisfying human hunger around the world.

The question is, who will provide the distribution, who will make sure that all people in the world are free from hunger?

The most relevant example I can think of today is the work of the many Christian relief services, quite often member directed, church-supported services for the poor around the world, most often in Africa, Asia or Central & South America.

There are also many other such organizations easily found on the Internet under "Charities."

So, given all that, hopefully we will decide in the future to use a different approach in our prayers, a way that will show clear evidence of God's divine benevolence but an even clearer insistence of our human responsibility for our brothers and sisters around the world.



Happy Birthday Ruth (8/11)

Prayer for Peace



Jamaica



Gathering in Silence Call to Prayer Lighting of Candle

Invitation - We welcome all who have gathered here and all who join us in prayer around the world. Each day in our Temple dedicated to the pursuit of peace, we pray for peace within, with one another and in the nations of the world.

Today we remember the people of Jamaica in our prayers. Jamaica is an island nation in the Caribbean. The island's somber history is rooted in the sugar-plantation economy and the slave era.

Modern Jamaica is a densely populated, poverty-ridden country that is struggling to escape dependency and debt. The Jamaican culture has a strong global presence, particularly in music. Community of Christ has been established in Jamaica since 1989. As we unite in prayer and worship, we celebrate God's promise of peace, which is for all creation.

Scripture Reading — Matthew 5:14-16 NIV You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before all people, that they

may see your good deeds and praise your Creator in heaven.

Prayer for Peace

Nadine Stallbaumer, Independence, Missouri

O God, Lover of peace and justice, we come to this place to give thanks, and to praise you for your vision of shalom for all creation. We come to pray and be near you. Through Jesus, you have expressed your grace and generosity for each of us, and we pray that you might guide and direct us as we seek to be your servants of peace. Help us be respectful of ourselves as well as others with whom we live and work. Help us remember how much you love each one, and act as you would to bring peace to all.

We come to pray for peace within our community. Help us build places of trust and responsibility where none go without the needs of life. Give us the courage to reach out to one another when there is a need to be filled, and to become the body of Christ.

We pray for the vision of peace in all nations. Please be with the leaders who carry the responsibility of creating nations interested in each citizen, not just the rich and powerful. Help us all to understand there is enough for all if we but decide to share what we have.

We come to pray for our world full of your goodness, but because of ignorance and greed, many live with pain, hunger, lack of work, war, sorrow, and unnecessary death. At times the need for peace is overwhelming, but if each one does their part, we can make a difference. We can build the peaceable kingdom! Walk with us on the path to peace, and help us be the good disciples you have called us to be. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Stewardship Thought For The Week

When the Spirit Moves - Acts 4:31-32

Windy days are part of our normal weather pattern.

We anticipate these days and some of us fly kites. Well a new season of winds is "blowing in." How thankful we are when we sense the Spirit of God moving among us like a refreshing wind.

The early church experienced it, and Luke recorded it in Acts 4:31-32 (NIV): "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

All the believers were one in heart and mind.
No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own,
but they shared everything they had."

When we recognize God's ownership of all we have, pray and witness boldly,
and sense a desire to minister to others through giving, be assured:
the wind of the Spirit is moving in us.

May the breezes of this season come,
and may the Spirit of God bring spiritual refreshing to our life and church.