

The Way of Love: PRAY

Dwell intentionally with
God daily.

*He was praying in a
certain place, and after he
had finished, one of his
disciples said to him,
“Lord, teach us to pray, as
John taught his disciples.”
– Luke 11:1*

*“Lord, hear our prayer.” -
Book of Common Prayer*

Jesus teaches us to come
before God with humble
hearts, boldly offering our
thanksgivings and concerns
to God or simply listening
for God’s voice in our lives
and in the world. Whether
in thought, word or deed,
individually or corporately,
when we pray we invite
and dwell in God’s loving
presence.

from www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove



BFFs

by Diane Thrush

Prayer is basic to living as a Christian. I learned this many years ago at my mother’s side. The how, why, and what changes as we grow and mature, but the basic structure of our daily walk is prayer. It is a given in following Jesus. What is prayer? It is a conversation with God. It is where we tell God what’s on our minds and give thanks for what we have.

Really? That's it? Yes. But we make it so much harder than that. We are being called in this new revival of the Way of Love to take prayer back to being "just" prayer – prayer in its most basic form.

I've taken courses, read books (so many books), given classes, on and on, and the bottom line remains the same – spending time in prayer daily. Recently I read an article on prayer from Ron Rolheiser, president of Oblate School of Theology, that was life-changing for me. Ron and I are of the same generation, subject to the same foibles and graces of our times, and I resonate with him often. His outlook on prayer was accurate for what I believe will be my last stage of prayer in my journey. My favorite line was, "As I've aged I've come to realize that being with God in prayer and being with God in my heart is like being with a trusted friend."

Wow, I have at many stages and phases made prayer such hard work. Trying to do it "right," But following the "right" formula, right timing, etc. has at many times made prayer exhausting for me. Too often it has been a "should" instead of "want to." I've never wanted to sustain a relationship with a friend composed of should and ought to. Who would want that?

Too often we have tended to look at a rule of life as a discipline with negative connotations. We've tended, at least in my generation, to emphasize "rule" as a negative, a forced plan. Jesus isn't about that! What was that he said about "I have come to bring you life, and life abundantly?" I want more of that in my life, and spending time with a trusted friend brings that.

So, for those of you getting started on this Way of Love forget any stereotypes you may harbor about what prayer is. It is about love and spending time with a trusted friend who brings no rules. Prayer is so much more than intercessory prayer. That is just a piece of the whole. It is about a daily practice that, like anything we do, starts with doing it, repeatedly. Daily prayer is a start, the minimum. I, and many others, have found

that praying at the beginning of the day is most helpful. I have always been easily distracted, so if I start my daily routine with prayer, there aren't as many things that get in the way. If I wait, it's gone for the day. I am not a morning person, yet if I don't do it then before I'm distracted, it's not going to happen.

The Episcopal Church Way of Love website is full of good resources for prayer. There is no one way, to pray, and the Episcopal Church offers many choices. We aren't bound to one formula or practice of prayer. No matter the form, prayer has truly become a way of life for me over the years. *R*



Diane is a retired chaplain and a member of St. Luke's, San Antonio. Reach Diane at dianewt@aol.com



For Reflection and Discernment

- What intentional prayer practices center you in God's presence, so you can hear, speak, or simply dwell with God?
- How will (or do) you incorporate intentional prayer into your daily life?
- With whom will you share in the commitment to pray?