

The Practice of Prayer



Word: Genesis 18:20-33

“²⁰ Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” ²² The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” ²⁶ The Lord said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” ²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.” ²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.” ³⁰ Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” ³¹ Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.” ³² Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.” ³³ When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

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Prayer, perhaps more than any other activity, is the concrete expression of the fact that we are invited into a relationship with God. . . .

The Power of Prayer

Usually we think of events on earth being interrupted because of actions in heaven. But our prayers are so important, so powerful, that all of heaven listens to our prayers—and

God responds. Prayer is about more than changing the course of history, however. Prayer is about our relationship with God. Perhaps more than any other activity, prayer expresses the fact that God has invited us into a personal relationship with him. Through prayer our human hearts are knit together with the heart of God.

Discussion:

1. What does your prayer pattern look like? If you don't have one that is consistent, what would you hope for it to look like? (Time and Place)
2. What are you most easily distracted by during your prayer time? Do you tend to be fully present in your prayer?
3. What are your thoughts on reviewing your prayer? Is it something new or not?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the greatest) where do you rate yourself when it comes to interceding for others?