

# SERMON NOTES Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2022

## sunnysidechurch

### Theme: Talking with God

Main passage: **James 5:13-18** Additional Readings: **Exodus 33:11-23, Luke 5:17-26**

### Some of the main themes from the sermon

#### What is prayer?

Prayer is communication between us and God. Two way communication. It involves us speaking and listening but isn't limited to words. Like any communication, prayer is framed by the relationship in which it takes place: My communication with different people is framed by our relationship; what we talk about, how we talk about it, how we share our silences and how else we communicate, such as by smiling or touch.

#### Prayer has always been part of the rhythm of life for the people of God

The whole of the biblical narrative, has people in conversation with God; from Adam and Eve, through Cain to Noah and onto Abraham and the people of Israel. The Psalms are conversations with God of all sorts. The prophets spoke with God. Jesus spoke with God with greater intimacy and urgency than anyone before him and he taught his disciples to pray. Paul's letters are steeped in prayer.

#### The surprising privilege of prayer

As we think about prayer, we have to pinch ourselves when we realise that the God who made the heavens and the earth is interested in communicating with us. What exactly do we bring to the party? However, the fact remains that God wants to communicate with people, from Adam and Eve onwards, God has always cherished God's human creatures. The story of Moses in Ex 33:11-23 reminds us of the gulf between our mode of being and God's and of the privilege that prayer is. Prayer is where earth and heaven meet.

#### A Pattern of Prayer

Jesus' advice to his followers in The Lord's Prayer is a pithy and comprehensive template for our prayers. It settles our conversation with God in that paradoxical relationship we have with the God who made the universe but who invites us to call Him, Daddy.

The Lord's Prayer also makes it clear that we are invited, in prayer, to be God's co-workers. God has made the world so that we play a part, through prayer in

the coming of God's kingdom on earth. Our prayers are necessary. They make a difference. Our praying helps God's will to be done.

#### Some practical thoughts (based on Luke 5:17-26 and James 5:13-18)

Don't give up praying	Enjoy being with God
Try not to tell God how to answer your prayer	Be prepared to work at prayer. Do the hard yards
Pray on occasions with other people if you can	Be prepared to be surprised

#### Some questions for thought and discussion this week:

1. *Share stories of when God has answered your prayers, both in ways that you hoped for and in ways that surprised you.*
2. *Talk with each other about prayers that remain unanswered How do you feel about your unanswered prayers?*
3. *Not all prayer is petition. Walking through a field or a street and actively sharing the experience with God is prayer. How do you pray?*
4. *Read Luke 5:17-26 and use the example of the friends of the paralysed man to 'get under the skin' of something that needs prayer. There are many calls on our prayer time: Ukraine, Afghanistan, the plight of refugees from wherever, people whom we know who are suffering physically and mentally. Pray together using words and silence to help you get under the skin of your chosen topics.*

#### Quote of the week from 'Little Gidding' by T S Eliot on the awe of meeting God in prayer:

*'If you came this way at any time or at any season, it would always be the same: you would have to put off sense and notion. You are not here to verify, inform curiosity or carry report. You are here to kneel, where prayer has been valid.'*