

Things are not getting any better on the global stage . We are still bombarded with awful images of the developing war, personal tragedies and untold suffering in the Ukraine. And what about Syria, Afghanistan, the Yemen, Ethiopia, the problems of severe weather and the effects of climate change all over the world. Sometimes it can all feel quite overwhelming and a feeling of helplessness may start to creep in. We can give financial aid and clothes to refugees, we can try and conserve energy but also we can and must keep praying to God.

We are encouraged time and time again to pray throughout the Scriptures. . We are also constantly assured that God listens to our prayers, He hears us loud and clear and that He will answer our prayers. We just have to trust Him, have faith in Him and He will answer them. You may think that in current times this is all easier said than done .

We must keep praying as this is the way to build a loving relationship with God, our Father . Praying is not a wish list but something much deeper. We are communing with God and praying for others is a way of deepening this relationship, anchoring ourselves in His love and goodness. God is our refuge and our strength, the source of all love and peace. Peace within ourselves and our hope for peace in the world.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace has unconditional love demanding that we love not only friends and family but also our enemies. It is this love that leads to life in all its fullness. He urges us to become peacemakers and one way we can do this is through the power of prayer, always trusting and having faith in the Lord.

Isaiah wrote that one day , in God's Kingdom, " The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox ; but the serpent – it's food shall be dust. They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain says the Lord."

Praying, this communing with God , is not just about words but what is really in the heart. Jesus urged his disciples to pray always , to persevere and to pray quietly without making a huge show of things like the hypocrites.

" Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you When you are praying , do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them , for your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matthew 6 v 6 – 8)

He then gave them the words of the Lord's prayer which have stayed with us ever since.

This all makes great sense. If we pray with a great amount of show then perhaps we are more concerned with what other people are thinking . If we pray at enormous length with complicated words and phrases then it becomes more about the action of prayer. Perhaps what matters is bringing our hearts to God, our faith and trust in Him so prayer can be simple, quiet and heartfelt.

Sometimes all words can fail us and I have discovered a couple of verses in Romans which have really helped.

Romans 8 v 26 -27

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit , because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God”

So it really is alright to sit quietly , alone with our thoughts and in silence before God. The Holy Spirit will intercede for us. This is a very comforting thought to me at the present time when there simply seems to be so very much to pray about .

Romans 12 v 12 -16

“ Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering , persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you ; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another”

And lastly

Philippians 4 v 4 – 7

“ Rejoice in the Lord always ;again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding , will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”