

From the Pastor's Desk 1980-1989

Congregational Prayer

Prayer has an important place in public worship. When God's people meet together, they join in prayer. Prayer in worship is a beautiful communal activity. We are not just individual believers who occupy pews for a few hours each Sunday. We are the covenant people, God's partners through Jesus Christ, who share each other's sorrows and joys. Notice that in the Lord's Prayer the words I, me, my and mine never appear. In ancient Jewish tradition, in which we have our spiritual roots, all are equal before God in prayer. God's heart and ears are open to all His children. "All are equal when they pray before God, women and slaves, sage and simpleton, poor and rich", Quoted by I Abrahams; Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, As we pray together, we bring our praise and adoration to God. We must have in mind a sense of awe for God's holiness. "I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips" (Ps. 34:1). Our thanksgiving for all what God has done for us should be expressed. "I will give thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation" (Ps. 118:21). "But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you, what I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

We also ought to bring everything in our hearts and lay it before God. Confession is good for the soul. Repentance and the forgiveness of sin are part of prayer as well as the marvel of God's mercy.

In prayer we may offer our petitions. Repeatedly we are told to seek the Lord, for He will answer. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). All our needs are met in Jesus Christ, whether they are at home or in business, at school or in the shop. Our God is able to supply. And in our days of national uncertainty and international crisis, we may plead with the Lord for peace and righteousness.

As we pray together in our public worship, let us give thanks that our heavenly Father never gets bored with the continual coming of His children to Him in praise, repentance and petition.