

Why Pray? Class 1
Prayer: Just do it!
September 15, 2017

Opening prayer. BCP p. 139

Introduction.

- Aims of the course: 1) to help people grow in their prayer life by inspiring them and by giving them tools. 2) to help Christ Church discern its prayer vocation.
- A secret to prayer

Luke 18:1-8

- What makes the difference in this parable?

Purpose of prayer: In prayer we learn to cooperate with God's work in the world.

- John 5:19-21
- We cooperate with God's work "outside" of us.
- We cooperate with God's work, "inside" of us.

Purpose of prayer: Regular prayer teaches us to long for our ultimate destiny.

- When we are "swallowed" up in a moment
- "The purpose of the entire material universe is to lead us into God's heavenly presence, to bring about communion with God, participation in the divine life. Thus are the church's sacraments are simply the beginning of the cosmic restoration. The entire cosmos is meant to serve as a sacrament, a material gift from God, in and through which we enter into the joys of his heavenly presence." – Hans Boersma Heavenly Participation.
- "We do not want merely to *see* beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it." – C. S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory"
- "If you want to build a ship, Don't drum up people to collect wood, and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." – Antoine de Saint Exupery, the author of The Little Prince.

- Some resources
 - The Lord’s Prayer
 - Other prayers from Scripture: Neh. 1:5-11; Eph. 3:14-21 and the Psalms
 - The Celtic example
 - The “set” times to pray in the BCP.

Questions for discussion:

- What, if anything, did you hear tonight that you really liked?
- What, if anything, did you hear that you didn’t like?
- What do you hope to learn through this course?
- Do you have regular patterns or habits of prayer? What are they?
- Do you find it easy to pray? Hard to pray? Some place in the middle?
- What barriers do you experienced in prayer?
- What has been your experience in prayer? Is it perfunctory? Mundane? Exciting?
- Have you ever had moments in prayer which you knew were really important? What were they? Why?
- What do you think of / how do you feel about the claim that Father Brian made that in prayer we learn to coordinate our work with God’s work?
- What do you think of / how do you feel about the claim that prayer helps us to long for our ultimate destiny with God?