

Prayer As Action!

On Sunday, our young adults led worship and one of our seminary students, Samantha Hasty-Zander, preached.

1. Warm up question: Only 32 shopping days left till Christmas! Who's the most difficult person on your list to buy for? What are you going to give him/her this year?
2. Read Mark 14:32-42. In this passage, in his hour of greatest need, Jesus models what powerful, effective prayer looks like. Samantha walked us through the passage, highlighting what we can learn from Jesus' example. "To start off," Samantha said, "I want to say that prayer is a place you *go to*." In the passage we just read, Jesus "went to" a special place to pray. Samantha calls this "that sweet spot where prayer makes sense for you." She encouraged each of us to find the place and the right time in the course of our typical day to pray.
 - a. Do you have a place to "go to" to pray? When and where is that place?
 - b. If you haven't yet found that "go to" place for prayer, imagine aloud when and where that might be for you.
3. Praying privately (just me and God) is powerful. But Jesus didn't stop there. He took Peter, James, and John with him and specifically asked them to join in prayer. Who are your Peter, James, and John? If you haven't yet found them, imagine aloud who they might be.
4. Read I Corinthians 10:13. People often say, "God won't give you more than you can handle." Samantha disagreed. She suggested that the point of I Corinthians 10:13 is: "God will give you more than you can handle, but God will also give you the way to handle it if you ask." When in your life, has God given you more than you could handle and, amazingly, God also gave you the strength to handle it?
5. Samantha emphasized that prayer is action. "Prayer is not the precursor to action; prayer is the action of asking God for the way to handle everything. . . . Prayer is the act of loving God enough to include God in the conversation. . . . Without prayer, we fail to give God a chance to have a voice in the plan of action in our lives."
 - a. As you see it, what's the difference between "prayer as precursor" to action and "prayer as action"? Why does this difference matter?
 - b. Looking back across your life, tell us about a time you wish you had spent a lot more time in discernment with God before acting?
6. But even prayer has its limits. After we have prayerfully discerned a course of action, like Jesus, we need to dare to move forward – instead of using further prayer as an excuse for procrastination. In our Scripture passage, after praying for a long time,

Jesus got up and said to his disciples, “Enough! The hour has come.” Having gained clarity in prayer, he was ready now to take the next bold steps.

- a. Tell us about a time in your life when, after a period of prayer and discernment, you dared to act boldly on what you felt God was saying? How did that go?
 - b. In what area of your life right now do you have a good intuitive sense of what God needs/wants you to do, but you are hesitating – maybe even procrastinating?
7. In our Oasis Groups, we all have the opportunity to be Peter, James, and John for others. In other words, we can offer to come along side one another and vigorously pray for each other, with the same passion as we pray for ourselves. As prayer requests are shared in your Oasis tonight, select one or two requests that speak to you and tell that person, “I’ll be praying for you – not just tonight – but in my personal prayers in the weeks ahead.” Living in spiritual community means we don’t have to walk alone!