

The transformative power of prayer and fasting

Jesus did not say “if you pray... but when you pray.”

Key thought to remember: Jesus cares about my behaviour and he wants to modify it a lot. Right behaviour is not enough, I need a right posture of the heart.

If you are able and know how to use the technology start with showing the YouTube video (the first 9.30 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNru2x-oTbc&t=1326s>

In the video:

- What do you find most helpful?
- What do you find most challenging?

Read: Matthew 6.5 – 18

Questions on the passage

Look closely at the Lord's Prayer as it appears here. This is a prayer about profound transformation: of thinking and acting in step with God and his priorities. Read it out:

- What should we be praying for, according to Jesus' teaching here?
- What phrase springs out for you? Why?

Transforming Prayer

Jesus speaks about the place of personal prayer, 'your room'. This may be an actual place; it can also refer to the place of prayer within - the place in our hearts where we encounter God.

- What are your 'places of prayer' like? (Describe your actual or inner places, it is helpful for us to hear each other.)
- If you could make one thing easier about praying to God, what would it be?
- How has a prayer that you prayed changed you, or transformed a situation?

Transforming Fasting

Fasting is not explicitly commanded in the NT but it is assumed. John Wesley said, 'Some have exalted fasting beyond all Scripture and reason; and others have utterly disregarded it.' Though fasting is primarily about not eating, it is possible to 'fast' from things other than food.

- How is Christian fasting different from good resolutions, dieting or generally abstaining?
- When could prayer with fasting be a good or helpful thing to do
- Share what experiences of fasting, or questions about it, which you have in the group.

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Action

For 30 days, from the 15th of June to the 15th of July, we will as a church community seek to grow in prayer individually and collectively.

We trust that the various activities (eg. prayer trail, prayer walk, Zoom morning prayer), events (eg. campfire prayer, “The Room” worship and prayer, 24h prayer) and the prayer room (side chapel) will enliven your prayer life and stir up your imagination.

God never drags us towards himself, but he *draws* us. What might you take from what you have shared and heard? It may be that God is speaking!

Prayer

Father, what a privilege to come to you in faith.

You amaze us and we are grateful for all the blessings we receive through the merits of your Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

As your ambassadors here on earth, open our eyes to see your works, our ears to hear your guiding voice, our hands to act out your plans and guide our feet to the places you want to transform.

Your kingdom come, your will be done among us as it is in heaven. Amen.

SPECIAL THIS SUMMER

MONTH OF PRAYER

2023

15TH JUNE - 15TH JULY

EVENTS	PRAYER ROOM	WORSHIP
15TH JUNE 7:30PM CAMPFIRE PRAYER		24 HOUR PRAYER EVENT
18TH JUNE, 2ND JULY 7:30PM 'THE ROOM'		PARISH PRAYER WALKS
CHURCHYARD PRAYER TRAIL		EXTENDED OPENING HOURS
FAMILY PRAYER BREAKFAST		FRIDAYS 5PM CHAPEL PRAYER
		MON, WED, FRI MORNING PRAYER 9:15AM

ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON