

Partners in Prayer: Ancient and Modern

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 March 2011

Preacher: Manya Egerton

[0 : 00] Amen. Let me know if you can't hear me. Can you hear me?

Can you hear me now? Okay. Recently, a non-church-going neighbor who knew I had taken early retirement asked me how I was spending my time.

Without giving it much thought, I responded saying, Oh, I've been praying a lot with people. Well, when I saw the look of embarrassment and bewilderment on her face, I realized I should have taken a bit more time thinking about my answer.

But it was a truthful one. Prayer does now play a much larger part in my life than it did many years ago. And one reason for this change, one important reason, and the one I want to talk about this morning is people.

People who have partnered with me in prayer. Now, you need to know that I am using the word partner very loosely. For some of these people have been dead for centuries.

[1 : 44] This is what I'm going to do this morning. I'm going to briefly describe five ways in which my prayer life has been enriched. And some of the people, both ancient and modern, hence the title for today, ancient and modern people, ancient and modern Christians, who have helped bring me closer to God in prayer.

Now, I've given you a list of quotes and prayers that loosely connect with my five points and a list of recommended books. Now, I know you're not supposed to do this ahead of time because people might, you know, read the quotes and not listen to me.

But actually, I don't mind because I really, really like these quotes. So, I like them so much. And if you like them and would like a Word document copy, just email Bill and I'd be happy to send you these quotes.

Now, although I am going to speak, obviously, in the first person singular, I do not want this to be Manya's story. Quite the opposite. So, while I am speaking, and my points are going to be quite brief, I want you, all of you, from the front of the room to the back of the room, I want all of you to think very seriously about the ways you have experienced blessing in your prayer life.

It could be participating with others in prayer or in some other way. It's a beautiful, almost spring morning. I think it's a wonderful morning to talk about blessing.

[3 : 27] So, I hope, in fact, I'm keeping this talk short enough that we will have several minutes at the end to hear from all of you. But, on to my first point. Praying our trouble.

Oswald Chambers says, and I quote, we have to pray with our eyes on God and not on the difficulty.

But we all know that's not always easy to do. Life's problems often loom very large. And in times of weariness or discouragement, God may seem very far off.

We need help, or at least I need help. But we need help to turn our eyes from the all-absorbing difficulties to look at God.

Several years ago, I found that help in other people's prayers. Those written from the early years of the Church right down to modern times.

- [4 : 33] I have found the prayers of the Universal Church in all their beauty and diversity have enabled me to turn my gaze from myself to my Savior.
- So, who were some of these people? You won't be surprised to hear that top of my list are the writers of the collets in the prayer book.
- And I don't have to tell you either that there are collets for every season of our life. But my number one all-time favorite collet and I haven't put it in this list because if you don't know it, you should look it up in your prayer book.
- And I'm sure you all have a prayer book, don't you? My all-time favorite collet is called Freedom from Worry, which you can find at the very back of your prayer book.
- When I pray that prayer, it is hard not to commit my tasks, myself, and all I love into God's safekeeping.
- [5 : 46] I cannot begin to count the number of times I have emailed this collet to friends who are not yet Anglicans. In fact, my niece was saying with us she's just done her final exams to be a massage therapist.
- And she is worried she has failed and she was going over and over and over last night what she might have done wrong. Now, she's a young woman who grew up in the church, but she hasn't been going to church for a long time.
- And I wanted to pray with her, but I thought I needed to be careful. I didn't want to pray too much or say too much. So I said, well, here's a prayer that's really helped me when I keep thinking of things in my life.
- And I read this collet, I prayed this collet with her and then asked God to help her. So, it's a good collet.
- But the prayer book is indeed a remarkable gift because if we use it as a guide for our life of prayer, we are freed, as William Law puts it, from the inconstancy of our heart.
- [7 : 04] We are freed to claim that the Lord is gracious and merciful even when our feelings would try to convince us otherwise.
- but there are others who have become my prayer partners both when I pray for myself or when I am praying for others.
- And up near the top of my list along with the writers of the collets are the early Celtic Christians. I have memorized a shortened version of St.
- Patrick's Breastplate which you can certainly find online if you don't have a copy yourself. But I have found that the repeated declarations of Christ behind, before, above, beneath, within, and without have helped the truth that God is indeed a present help in times of trouble sink deep, very deep into my soul.
- I find I turn to Celtic prayers again and again when I am truly at a loss for words. We know that time when we want to share a word of encouragement or support with a friend and we don't know what to say.
- [8 : 32] We don't know what to pray. I find that in their remarkable simplicity and gentleness I am able to offer those on my heart into God's good care.
- For example, when praying for a dying friend, when praying for Ken Stevenson, I paraphrased this prayer from the island of coal, and I quote, be with him and for him dear Lord, as he walks upon the road of brightness that runs between earth and thy glory.
- Another time for another friend I prayed and I quote, I am beseeching thee to keep my friend from ill, to keep her from hurt, to keep her from harm.

Lord God, shield her, fill her, keep her, watch her, bring her to the land of peace, to the country of the king. Thanks to these ancient prayers, as well as David Adams' modern prayers in the Celtic tradition, I have been helped to bring the particular and urgent concerns of my heart to God while at the same time keeping eternity in view.

I could share more but I must move on to my next point. Point two, praying the daily.

[10 : 29] In his book, *Calendar, Christ's Time for the Church*, Lawrence Stokey says, and I quote, to be deeply Christian is to know and live out of a conviction that the whole human family dwells continuously at the intersection of time and eternity.

I think that as Anglicans, we would say a hearty amen to that statement. For as we apply the liturgical year to our devotional and prayer life, we are constantly reminded that God in Christ is redeeming not just his world but time itself.

Growing in my awareness of this truth has brought me great blessing. I have come to treasure the partnership of Christians who have helped me live and pray aware both of *kairos* meaning time when God acts and *chronos* calendar time.

Chief among these partners are still the writers of the prayer book. In their prayers I have been helped to begin each day looking to God.

O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. In the morning I will direct my prayer unto thee and look up. And at night I have learned to ask God to preserve us, O Lord, waking and guard us sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace.

[12 : 27] Now, we could stop right here and spend several weeks on the prayer book and how it helps us pray the daily.

But since I can't, I would just like to point to Sue Careless's fine books on the prayer book, which you will see in my book list.

She's written three, but I particularly commend the first one, which is about personal prayer. There are many prayers that have helped me practice the presence of God through the day, but I confess a special fondness for night prayers.

Maybe it's because I wrote prayers and prayed them for the evening service for well over a decade, and during that time I came to understand the real differences between morning worship and evening worship.

Or maybe it's because my nights have sometimes been, and I borrow a wonderful phrase from the Compline service, times of nightly fears and fantasy.

[13 : 44] But whatever the reason, I regularly lean into the faithfulness of other Christians whose night prayers I always keep close at hand.

I find that I need help to be honest with God at the end of my day. I need help to repent. I need help to ask and actually receive God's forgiveness.

And as I mentioned earlier, I need a lot of help to place the day that has passed and my tomorrow into his safe keeping.

There are lots of night prayers. Diedrich Bonhoeffer, St. Augustine, John Calvin, St. Francis of Assisi, they have all helped me do this.

But when darkness falls, I am drawn to prayers that for some reason seem to speak most directly to my heart.

[14 : 55] And yes, here they are again, the Celts. For, as one modern writer puts it, there is a particular tenderness to their prayers, especially what are called bed blessings.

And these are the prayers that are said before people go to sleep. And here's a few lines for one of my favorite prayers. I am lying down tonight in the fellowship of Christ, in the fellowship of the gracious Father of glory, in the fellowship of the spirit of powerful aid.

Now, I see some of you looking at your sheets. I haven't put all my quotes on those sheets. I've put different quotes, but if there's any quotes that you want from my talk, as I said, just to get my email address from Bill Chandler, and I'd be happy to send them to you.

these bed blessings, these night prayers, I have emailed to many, many friends because of their beautiful affirmation of the presence of God at night, a time when we often forget his closeness.

And I have had friends tell me that when the concerns of the past day make it hard for them to pray and sleep, these partners in prayer have helped them go to the one who is the source of all comfort.

[16 : 54] Night prayers have helped me and I think can help all of us. Say with the psalmist in peace I will both lie down and sleep for you alone O Lord make me dwell in safety.

That's from Psalm 4. But on to the next point. Point 3 praying the daily.

Our nights and days matter to God as does I've discovered our ordinary everyday lives.

Over my years of praying other people's prayers I keep coming back to my English prayer partners and not just the writers of the BCP or the early Celts.

I keep coming back to English prayers because they seem most in touch with real life. Now I didn't know why that was the case and I thought maybe I was the only one that felt this.

[18 : 10] But I discovered I wasn't. In fact the editors of the Little Gidding anthology of English spirituality and they probably should know much better than me these editors describe the English spirit as and I quote essentially practical any spiritual input impulse in order to take root in the English character has to be grounded in everyday life.

So those of you who are English can tell me if that's the case. But as I have sought to cultivate a prayer life that extends to the uneventful and ordinary places in my life I have come to love and I mean love the prayers of William Barclay.

Now I know he's out of fashion and I won't claim all his views of my own but I am very sorry that the plain man's book of prayers yes even with its sexist title now only turns up in used book sales and my used books my copy that I got at a used book sale is in very poor shape so if any of you see some free copies lying around you can pass it on to me but if you're not familiar with Barclay listen as I read lines from one of his morning prayers oh god our father who have bidden us live in fellowship with one another keep us from things that would make us difficult to live with today it gets better keep us from being touchy and quick to give offense and slow to forget it and from his evening prayers forgive me oh god if i have behaved today as if i was the only person who was busy and as if i was the only person who had a lot to do and oh god i think this is my favorite prayer my favorite phrase oh god i thank you for the pleasure i found in the company of people whom up until now i have thought uninteresting sometimes i need to be reminded how great the love of god is but other times i really really need to be convinced of my daily and ordinary sins so ordinary and so daily in fact that i probably would overlook them without the help of prayer partners like barclay below one and h who men

Kathleen Norris says, we want life to have meaning. We want fulfillment, healing, and even ecstasy. But the human paradox is that we find these things in starting where we are, not where we wish we were.

However, Barclay has helped me overcome my reluctance to bring the mundane details of my life to God in prayer.

[22 : 07] As I was preparing this talk, I kept thinking about crabgrass. I thought, why do I think about that? And I thought, you know, there's some things like crabgrass or it's just so ordinary that, you know, we just kind of eventually mow over it and don't look at it.

And there's some aspects of our prayer life that are so banal in their sinfulness. They're so ordinary. They're not grand and shocking.

That we can just, or at least I can overlook them. And I need people like Barclay to help me say, whoops, maybe smile, but give thanks that God is making a way for me back to him to confess about the small, but yet to him, significant ways in which I've sinned and repent and accept his forgiveness.

But there are others who help me. And yes, they are English. Now, some of us in this room are retired and some of us are not.

But we all still work, even if we're no longer paid. I have found that David Adams' power line, Celtic Prayers About Work, I found that it's the only book I could find entirely devoted to the activities that take up most of our day, which is work.

[23 : 40] our lives at work give us a sense of achievement and satisfaction, as well as times of discouragement and weariness and sometimes failure.

Praying these prayers for myself and others has helped me remember that God really does care about our daily bread and the times we spend earning it.

Point four, in case you're keeping track. Praying as silence. We are told in Psalm 46 to be still and know that I am God.

but being still at any time and especially before God has never been easy for me. Some of you have a naturally contemplative spirit.

I do not. I have needed help. Help God graciously provided in prayer partners. But this time, real people.

[24 : 56] People who are alive. What am I talking about? Well, about ten years ago, I was asked to be on the board of Living Waters Canada.

Because I knew very little about the ministry, I signed up for the introductory eight-week program held, actually, here in Room 100. I learned that the program is made up of three parts.

Worship, teaching, and small group prayer. prayer. I also discovered that my prayer group wasn't like any I had been in before.

Why? Because the leaders were comfortable with silence. They were able to be still in God's presence. In the safe and supportive context of this small group, I and the other participants were encouraged to be still in God's presence and listen before talking and praying.

It was a remarkable experience that radically changed my life of prayer. Harry Emerson Fosdyke didn't realize he was talking about me when he wrote, and I quote, one of our strongest misconceptions about prayer is that it consists chiefly in talking to God, whereas the best part of prayer is our listening to God.

[26 : 37] I had no idea of some of the extraordinary things God wanted to say to me because I couldn't or wouldn't be still in his presence.

I learned to do that because of the prayer support of others. In the months and years following my time in Living Waters, I found, and here I am borrowing a phrase from John Wesley, I found my heart being strangely warmed.

Prayer is no longer about doing for God but about being with God. Point five, being a prayer partner.

as my desire to adopt a posture of listening obedience before God grew, so did my desire to share that blessing.

But I discovered as I took up leadership of a Living Waters small group that prayer is especially difficult for some members of the Christian community.

[28 : 06] What do I mean? We have often heard liberals in the church say that we need to stop talking about God and calling him father because of the bad experience that people have had with their human fathers.

Well, I think that is the wrong answer to a very good question. the truth which I didn't know because I experienced unconditional love as a child is that many, many Christians actually can't call God Abba Father.

And I have met them not just in living waters but right here in this church. The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans, the Romans that we're studying right now, he tells us in Romans 8.15 that you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry Abba Father.

But because of their wounds, many believers are still living on the wrong side of that verse. They find it impossible to truly believe that God loves them and that they really are adopted as his beloved children.

Instead, they lead lives of fearfulness and discouragement. they really have no idea, really have no idea that he loved them even before they were born.

[29 : 53] Instead, and I say this from experience of being with them, instead salvation means sneaking into heaven behind Jesus, a strange sort of substitutionary atonement devoid of love.

in his powerful book on Christian fellowship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, and I quote, there is a kind of listening with half an ear that presumes already to know what the other person has to say.

Well, I hate to say it, but Bonhoeffer was talking about me. I didn't know the number of believers who lived in fear, not in love.

Why? Because I hadn't listened. In living waters, I learned not only to be attentive to the Holy Spirit, but also truly to listen to those asking for prayer.

And as I listened, the obvious became clear. Those who find it hard to form healthy relationships with other people because their own emotional needs were not met as children, find it equally hard to trust their Heavenly Father.

[31 : 27] God of love is really the God of love is really far off.

And may love other people, but really doesn't love them. So what am I suggesting? That we throw out worship, Bible study, and replace our clergy with psychiatrists and counselors?

Absolutely not. By no means. That's not what I'm saying. But I think, and I learned in living waters, and I continue to learn, I think this, I think we need to keep reminding ourselves that the heart matters.

Knowledge of God's truth and believing the tenets of Christian faith are not in themselves enough. This is especially important because some Christians, and I think more than we realize, are indeed doubly burdened.

Burdened as we all are by sin, but also by injuries of the heart. Now, I'm not going to stop there because God does heal these brothers and sisters just the way he heals us.

[33 : 16] and my journey of prayer has been one of not only growth and blessing but healing. And how does he do this?

Same way he wants to work in all of our lives by seeing spiritual friendship, which is another way of describing prayer partners, as central to the life of the church.

And here's a quote from David Brenner. Deep knowing of self and God requires deep knowing of and by others.

The knowing that leads to love can never be a head knowing, a knowing about God. The knowing that leads to devotion must be based on a heart knowing.

I believe that spiritual friendships, which are safe, confidential, and motivated by love, are places where our hearts can be continually warmed by the love of God.

[34 : 30] And it is from that place of love that our heart cry truly becomes one of Abba Father.

Thank you. God now, I originally thought that my remarks would end right there. Having shared some of my partnerships in prayer and the blessings that they brought me, I planned to then open up the conversation and hear from you.

and we will get to that. But a few weeks ago I met with Susan Norman, an old friend many of you know, who now works with graduate students through Intervarsity Christian Fellowship.

She introduced me to a book *Desiring the Kingdom, Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, and it's on your book list, by James Smith, who is a philosopher at Calvin College.

And I found that this discourse illuminates the points of experience and partnership that I have already described. In the preface to this book, which is focused on Christian education, Smith suggests that schools are off to the wrong foot, are on the wrong foot when they place the absorption of ideas above the formation of hearts and desires.

[35 : 50] According to Smith's model for personhood, and I quote, we are ultimately desiring animals, which is simply to say that we are essentially and ultimately lovers.

To be human is to love, and it is what we love that defines who we are. He contrasts his Augustinian desiring model of personhood with both the rationalist picture of the human person, I think, therefore I am, and the reformed emphasis on belief.

In these last few minutes, I can't begin to do his book justice. In fact, it's quite a heavy read. But I want to say that in his book, he neither denigrates the role of knowledge or belief in schools of Christian education and in individual Christian lives.

But he does say that to assume, and here I quote, that human beings are primarily thinking things, or maybe believing animals, gives us a stunted and flattened picture of the rich complexity of being human.

to say, as Smith does, that our identity as human persons is shaped by what we ultimately love rings true for me.

[37 : 21] It makes sense of my prayer journey. For while I do pray more now than I did ten years ago, this did not come about by learning more about prayer.

It was as prayer partners have helped me in my daily, ordinary, and sometimes troubled life, it is as they have helped me pray, my desire for the one who is love has grown.

I now desire to be in his presence. But this isn't about just about me. I think James is right, James Smith is right, when he says that at the heart of each of us, every one of us, and here I quote, is a kind of a love pump, which can never be turned off, not even by sin or the fall, rather the effects of sin on our love pump is to knock it off kilter, misdirecting it and getting it aimed at the wrong things.

I think we continually need to have our love redirected, and one of the wonderful ways I have been helped, and I think we all can be helped, to return to Jesus and his love, is by those who join with us in prayer, be they ancient or modern.

prayer. Now, before I open up for questions or comments, I, since I have the mic here, I'm going to make two public service announcements.

[39 : 22] One is that if you want to learn more about living waters, there's going to be a missions lunch, the last Sunday in March, and so you can hear more about the ministry. And the second is the service that I don't think some of you have come to called Keeping Company with God.

And this is on the second and fourth Mondays. This is a quiet service with music and a short homily by our own Harvey guest. But we have three, every time we meet, there are three prayers that are integrated into the liturgy.

Prayers for all those in need, prayer for those for their church, and prayer for the world. And many of those evenings, prayers from anthology of prayers are integrated into this service.

So if you are wanting a quiet service, I would commend this Monday service to you. But now, I think we have some time, and so I would like to open up the conversation to you.

And perhaps you would maybe just stand if you want to ask a question, or say something, share something about your life of prayer. And maybe since I probably know a lot of you, but I may not know all of you, just introduce yourself.

[40 : 42] Hi, my name is Brock, I wanted to confirm what she was saying about listening to God. It just seems that when I do pray, it's like I get more God's perspective.

It seems to be more. Thank you. I do find that I get my prayer like a consummate.

thing. You know, you start in a new way of praying and thinking, well, I'm really on a roll now. And then over the months it becomes, you're doing it by roll time to a while.

So this has really refreshed my enthusiasm for praying. I'm listening to God. God. Thank you so much. I was part of a peer partnership for about three years with my friend and we had certain issues of family life.

So we did not actually come together, but we set a day of the week and a certain hour when we felt that the Holy Spirit would be working with us.

[42 : 11] to bring fulfillment. And it was a wonderful experience. But it does take a government to be loyal to that.

And business gets in the way. But what I did was write my prayers before I actually went to pray. And I found that lovely.

And you referred to the prayer book. Those moments that I couldn't pray for some reason but I wanted to be true to the course that I would have said every week, one day a week.

So I prayed the prayers from the prayer book, which were very comforting. And they seemed to be out for the moment as well. So I certainly recommend it because looking back on those prayers, I've seen life coming from that.

And experiencing that there have been changes made in these people's lives that we prayed for. So it's been a wonderful experience and I recommend it. learnings.

[43 : 40] God changes us us inwardly to affect the external circumstances that we happen to be in.

And reading the very first paper, to me, was like each internal situation. Like, hey, God, fix that over there.

No, God, change this. I don't know whether this sounds...

Oh, I get to boss film. My name is Bill Chandler. In my contemplations of the difficulties with prayer, the circumstances and so forth, I thought up the idea that there was one time in my prayer life for an encounter with God where heaven had a party afterwards.

And that was my conversion moment. And if I go back and contemplate that encounter with God and try to examine the elements of what was there, I've come to the conclusion that those elements should be in part in my prayers.

[45 : 12] And hoping that perhaps heaven will have another party and I'll get it right. But there was some very powerful elements at work in that simple encounter with God that, to me, resulted in the ultimate blessing of salvation.

So, for me, there's something in that encounter, especially for the late believer like I was, a late convert. If you've been brought up in the Christian faith all through your life, perhaps that occasion is not so Christally clear.

But what do you think of that? Are you going to reply to us? Or are you going to... I guess I would like to know what were the components of that, that kind of did resonate?

It sounds like there were things there that would be good for... One strong element was I believe what God was saying, which I was reading. Two, I had a very strong need of God.

The word need comes into it. And I read a David Watson pamphlet once when he said, if you don't have a need in your life of God, then he doesn't have a need for you.

[46 : 38] He doesn't have any... So the word need is very strong in there too. Faith, I couldn't describe to you at the time what that meant.

But the best way of describing faith is believing what God has said. And that's... I remember that was in my encounter.

I didn't have any assurance of my salvation for a couple of hours. But marvelously someone came into my life, showed me some scriptures where the promises were there.

And he asked me the question, is God a liar? I said, no, of course not. He said, well, when you took him at his word, what do you think has happened?

So he said, what do you want to do? I said, well, I think I'd like to pray a prayer of thanksgiving, which I hadn't done before. And that... So those elements were all in that encounter within a few hours of my conversion.

[47 : 42] So I still go there when I'm getting mechanical with my prayer. Or indifferent with it. Or not caring with it.

I go back there. And it energises me in a much more honest way. I think what everybody has said up till now, in different ways, is that our prayers need to come from who we are.

You know, our heart, your need, our heart as well as our head. And that we stop doing that repeatedly. And that we all need help.

We all need help to come back to God as integrated body, mind, and spirit. I spoke in the evening service once on a similar theme like this.

And I used... But for that, I used the... The title of the talk was A Little Help from Our Friends, from the Beatles. But I won't use that this morning. So please, I think we have some more time.

[48 : 59] Please. Yeah, you then. I've got to pay attention to this guy. I just was going to say, Thanksgiving has been kind of a private home in terms of prayer for me.

And sometimes, and I haven't done this recently, but it's occurred to me that some people have talked about if they're musical, just praying or singing like it is sort of helpful.

And that the comment about the ordinary things that happen to us, that really may be God speaking.

And it just so happened that this morning or the other day I was reading a little debushional thing that talks about Moses and the burning bush. And he just kind of, I mean, a burning bush isn't ordinary at all, but of course.

But he kind of turned and asked a question about it. And in that, when I reflect on my own life, I think of little things that have happened.

[50 : 19] And I reflect and I'm like, oh, okay, I get it. But it took just a moment to ask questions about something. I got to let my husband go before you, Sheila, you know.

Well, as one of the partners, not the cheap part, maybe not so much a partner in prayer.

At least we do pray together at various times. But what I was struck with listening to Amanyia was when she went to the prayer book, which is such a rich resource for many of us, I'm sure.

The things that she cited from the prayer book were those that were completely memorized by me. We must have been reading the same parts of the prayer book, although perhaps I was doing it earlier than that she was.

She was an Anglican. Well, you were Pentecostal once upon a time, too. But how many of us sit down and memorize parts of the prayer book?

[51 : 32] I don't think many of us do. I've tried to do that unsuccessfully. But the daily and weekly use of prayers from the prayer book starts a process whereby, in a sense, God and the words of those people that worship God in the English language and put it into the prayer book, they, in a sense, memorize us, I think.

And those passages that Amanyia cited are deeply meaningful. And they come at any time of the day or the fantasies of the night.

And they are, for me, very, very comforting. The other thing I would briefly say that Amanyia hasn't mentioned, and that was, as there's a prayer I pray, constantly.

I don't think a day goes by or evening or night goes by, and that is the Lord's Prayer. And I find that fixes in its rhythms, almost precisely, the five points that Amanyia was talking about, in that we are put into desiring God in the first few words of the Lord's Prayer.

So I will commend that as well. Thank you, Amanyia. Thank you, sir. Great. Thank you. Thank you. I would add that, and I'm not even married to you.

[52 : 55] No, this is not just very comfortable, but also a very nice balance with the kind of program we have in Learners Exchange. And I want to ask a question related to that, because I read a very interesting statement on the last page here that says, quoting from John Stott, Well, you know, this church has undertaken a major teaching responsibility, and I do not decry that in any way.

As an educator, I think it's wonderful. I used to wonder, how does anybody get converted in the Anglican Church, because my background was Baptist. And until the guy called John Chapman came in my first year of attending here, and he spoke like a Baptist, I thought, here it is.

People are actually being challenged to accept Christ as Savior and begin to understand what he can do and has done for them.

But that making up for that imbalance, which may have been a part of Anglican Theology, we are trying to do that. We are doing Women at Ten, we are doing Learners Exchange, we are doing direct, expository preaching from the pulpit and everywhere else.

And I find, when I go to committee meetings, when I go to my small group, that prayer always comes last, there is never enough time for it.

[54 : 28] We are so busy learning theology, and I'm saying that we have to learn the faith in order to be able to defend it, which we are currently doing.

Can you suggest to us ways in which we could establish a better balance there? You know, committee meetings are a prime example.

We have the pro forma begin and end with prayer. This is not what running the church is about, you know? How can we get that balance sorted out a bit better?

Can you help us with that? Well, I want to be careful what I say, because this is a beloved church, and I think that something that already is happening, which is the Keeping Company with God service, is a prayer service where there is space to be quiet.

There is 15 minutes of quiet music in the middle, and people can be still with God, or they can go to prayer stations during that same time and receive prayer.

[55 : 45] I think that Tuesday Evensong is also a time of prayer.

I would like to see more, and I can say this, I would like to see more of what I've come to call sort of prayer care, where prayer and pastoral care become more united, where we have more opportunities in this church family to form the kind, and I'm not saying they aren't already existing in all the Bible studies and the groups that meet, but I suspect there is more, there's need for encouraging the kind of spiritual friendships or prayer partners that have the kind of the format that David Renner was talking about, and some of the things that happen in living waters, where we are encouraged to bring our whole selves.

And I do think that sometimes in a church which is large, and where people during the week are in various parts of the lower mainland, to have opportunities to be still before God regularly with a brother or sister in Christ, in that kind of way, are probably not as frequent as they could be.

So those are, but this is just, these are, they're just a few thoughts. Thank you. But I, yeah. My name is Catherine. I was just going to say also in terms of that, is the, I think they call them the family gathering.

Is that what they call them? I think the church leadership has been trying to have meetings, is it once a term? Four times a year. Four times a year. Four times a year. Quarterly, where they hope to gather as much of the whole community of the church together.

[57 : 42] And some of that time is in sharing different things that are going on in the church, that we would know more about the other parts of the church other than our little parts. And some of that time is for corporate and small group prayer, just exactly the way you're saying.

And I think that sort of, the leadership has a real vision that that would grow. I think that's great. And I'm glad we do that. And we probably need to be ending pretty soon. But I would say also, and I'm not disagreeing with you, but I would say to have prayer partnerships where it's confidential and where you feel safe and where you can be still before God is different than that kind of thing.

And so that's what I would like to see more of. Gail, did you want to say something? Just one little thing. And it's personal and I think it's corporate.

Our prayer is really our response to God. It's not about what we do. And God has called us and we respond to that call. And it's personal. It's a moment there. I'm not a moment there.

It's because there's so in there. And it's a beautiful love of there. It expands and incorporates everybody. But it has to start. Jane? Yes.

[59 : 00] My name is Jane Young. I was just jotting down some things here, which I think I've incorporated into my first time, which I'm sure many of you have also.

The fact of writing down the thoughts that occur to us when we are in an attitude of openness to God, that a lot of insight comes. And you see how one idea leads to another.

And also, I was thinking about our senses, how God speaks to us through our senses. And that includes visual.

Maybe not that I can see God up there, but also in my mind's eye. I've been challenged recently in some of the things that I've had to face.

And so I found myself really trying to keep maybe not an exact image of Christ in my mind, but an awareness of his presence.

[60 : 05] And that is like Paul speaks to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and the intention for our faith. So I think cultivating and opening ourselves in all aspects of our being for God to pour forth his revelation.

So I would say for me, my mind's eye, that God can bring revelation in my imagination.

So, thank you. One point I had to leave out was imagination and prayer. Hi, my name's Trout. I was going to speak about imagination too, because as children, when you watch little kids out there, I mean, their imaginations are just full.

A crack in the sidewalk is either going to be a small stream or a river or a great big canyon to climb down and climb up the other side or to leap over.

And an old rag is either a cape or, you know, a cloak that they can wrap around themselves and, you know, fly. It can become magic carpet.

[61 : 24] But they believe very strongly in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny and, you know, the Tooth Fairy and all those things. But adults seem to crush all of that, and so does our schooling.

Our schooling teaches us facts and then gives us exams, yes, no, or me. So where is the imagination? You know, we come into the church as damaged people, broken, and with all the things that have happened to us.

And we get into the scripture, and of course God speaks in imagery. And we're sitting there trying to read this stuff and thinking, what the heck is this? You know?

And this was discussed at a course yesterday that I take, and imagery was brought out. And they said, picture God.

And I said, I couldn't do it. And I'm an artist. But if you went out there and grabbed one of the kids and say, what do you see as God? He would tell you. He could almost picture it and, you know, scribble it out with a pen or a crayon.

[62 : 29] I couldn't have done that. And this is part of my prayer life, too, because there's no imagination. Like how can I, like Jane was saying, how can I picture God?

So, this is going to take me into a whole different place of where I have to go back into my heart with a great big, you know, cloth type digger.

And allow Jesus to unearth all of those things that, you know, and all my dreams have been bottled up and sucked away, buried so deep that I don't even know where they are.

But those were my dreams. That was my imagination. And, you know, all these things have to be dug back up again. And, of course, you can go to Jesus and in a quiet moment you have to, like Manu was saying, you've got to have that quiet moment, you know, where you just shut down everything and then you allow him to speak to you.

And if you ask him a direct question, he will answer you. And it will come in your mind or in your heart or however it's going to come to you. You know, and he will unearth those things for you.

[63 : 48] So, this is one of the things that I'm in the process of doing is sitting down every day and having quiet time in the morning, quiet time at night. And then I will ask Jesus to answer some question that I am really struggling with.

And he's giving me the answers. And it's just in the peace and quiet, you know. I don't do it while I'm in bed because I tend to just go, you know.

But that shows the peace that's in my heart, you know, when you just go to sleep. And the other thing was that in order to do that yesterday, they put on a very, very soft music from Bach or something like that.

And, you know, he just said, just be quiet and then just let that picture appear. And when I did, I was shocked.

Because the picture was about something that I want to do. But it came in just a really crazy, you know, like the imaginary thing.

[64 : 59] How can you understand something that was a massive German beer hall at, what is it, Oktoberfest?

And then all of a sudden a fog came in and all you could see was his head. And then Christ appeared. And everybody looked up like this and, you know.

It was just weird. But, you know, at least the imagination's working. I was going to say something to begin with and be short, but I held that.

But now Travis is... Anyways, I really, my heart's been softened this morning. And in June of 1988, my brother, Travis, who died.

And I go to being Travis H. And for the past year, I've lost my words. I just feel like the words are coming back now.

[66 : 00] And all I want to do is pray. Can we pray?

Can we pray? Thank you, Heavenly Father, for this gathering this morning.

Thank you for Monia. Thank you for George. Thank you for their blessing to us. Thank you for Dr. Packard.

Thank you for the book Knowing God. Thank you for the words that he wrote about the trials we go through. Help us to be strong to meet them with your help.

The power of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for the righteousness of Christ. Thank you for the rich heritage we have in this pamphlet.

[67 : 15] Thank you for the glory of the grace and knowledge. And in Jesus Christ's name we pray.

Oh, Holy Spirit. Lord, we thank you for your love for us. We pray that you will draw near to each of us today and in the week ahead.

Lord, we pray that as we draw near to you, that our hearts will be warmed. Lord, we love you, but you love us more.

Show us how to grow in our love for you. And do embrace daily more and more of your great love for us. And we pray, Lord, out of that place that we will share that love, both with this church family and with our needy world.

Amen. And as I said, if anybody wants a Word document of the quotes or anything else, I'd be happy to get my email address and send it to you.

[68 : 43] Thank you. Amen. Sure.