

St. Mary's Article

Date: 20th April 2020

How to Pray

Pete Greig, in his book *Dirty Glory*, helpfully suggests four reasons why many people find intercession difficult in the face of disasters, which, I hope, we might find helpful and learn from as we struggle to cry out to God in the face of the current pandemic.

1. A limited world view. *A failure to discern the spiritual reality behind the unfolding tragedy.* Greig says, “We find ourselves believing more in ambulances than angels, in the power of politicians more than the power of prayer”. In Ephesians 6 Paul is very clear. He says our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

2. A low self-esteem. *A failure to recognise that, now we belong to him, God has given us real spiritual authority.* God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms.

3. Doubts about prayer. *Can prayer really change situations?* In James we read, “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective”. Jesus makes the amazing promise to do whatever we ask in his name so that the Father may be glorified.

4. Practical questions about how to pray. Greig says, “Many people believe that they ought to pray at such times, they want to pray, but they do not know how to wrap words around so much chaos and loss”. Knowing what to pray at times of crisis can be very difficult.

He goes on to suggest three basic areas to focus on in prayer in the face of such crisis:

1. People effected. We ask God to comfort those who suddenly find their lives torn apart by grief, loss, fear and trauma.

2. Those ministering in Jesus name to the victims. We ask God to give wisdom, courage and empathy to those seeking to bring Christ’s presence and hope in the midst of trauma and pain.

3. Peacemakers and authorities. We ask God to give clarity and wisdom to governments and agencies blessing and supporting their efforts to bring justice, reconciliation and aid.

So, as God’s people, let’s stand strong and lift up the shield of faith against the dark forces of evil trying to destroy us. Let’s continue to cry out to our loving heavenly Father, day and night, for mercy and deliverance. Let’s continue to believe that he is still able to work miracles, that nothing is impossible for him and, that in the mighty name of Jesus, he will confound everyone’s expectations and quickly and permanently defeat this pandemic, bringing glory to His name.

Suggested songs for this week’s 12 noon prayer times

Tuesday: Strength will rise as we wait upon the lord.

Wednesday: Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer

Thursday: Way Maker

Friday: Father hear the prayer we offer

Saturday: Jesus hope of the nations

Monday: Father I place into your hands