



Muncy Baptist Church NEWSLETTER

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Drawing Closer: Prayer and Presence

WITH REV. ROB RICE, PASTOR

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told His followers that when they prayed, it should not be an exercise in publicity, but an act of devotion to God (Matthew 6:5-6). Prayer is sacred, and our main audience is an audience of One. In prayer, we praise God for all He has done, give thanks for the blessings we have, and present our requests before Him. If our prayers are designed to make us appear religious and holy before others, we've completely missed the point of the act.

While Jesus called His followers to pray in secret (Matthew 6:6), that doesn't mean that we can't and shouldn't pray in other settings. Time and time again in Scripture, we find people praying with others listening. Sometimes, these were very public settings, such as when Solomon dedicated the temple (1 Kings 8:22-53). In John 17, Jesus prayed with the disciples listening. We are often called to pray with and for others, and these things highlight that prayer isn't always done in secret, sometimes it's done with others, and many times, with others listening to us.

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How do we balance what Jesus said in Matthew, and the fact that there are many situations when we will be called on to pray in more public settings?

One of the ways we can balance these things is to remember that prayer is a conversation and to hear what Jesus said next in the Sermon on the Mount. We don't need to be eloquent in our language nor polished in our speech. We don't need to keep babbling on and on, but we must offer our hearts to God and remember that God knows them (and our needs) before we ask of them (Matthew 6:8). We don't need to use any special words or language. Instead, we can follow the model presented to us by Jesus in the Lord's prayer, that highlights adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.

Another reminder we may need to hear is that when we are called on to pray with others, our very presence can make a great impact. Lifting others up in secret prayer is important, but standing beside them in simple prayer may be just as meaningful. We often think that it's our words that will make the difference, but it's our willingness to be present, and pray, even if it is nothing more than a simple request for God to meet us in that moment.

Later on this month, we will take part in the annual tradition of a prayer walk for Muncy Schools. As part of our service, we will also pray for the neighboring districts that are represented in our congregation (Montgomery, Warrior Run, Hughesville, and Montoursville). Each year, I encourage you to join us as we pray for students, parents, administrators, teachers, coaches, and staff, but let me remind you, while your prayers are important, so is your presence. Make every effort to be there this year at the prayer walk, and if you can't, make an effort to pray with one of our many students or teachers when you have a moment at church.

Together, let's call upon the Lord to bless these valuable members of our church and our community, and trust that He will hear our prayers, and meet our needs in Christ Jesus!



A Willing Witness

POWERFUL PRAYER

WITH REV. DR. DON EDWARDS, ASSOCIATE PASTOR



2 Chronicles 20:3-9 says, "Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the Lord for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the Lord's help. Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the Lord. He prayed, "O Lord, God of our ancestors, you alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of

all the kingdoms of the earth. You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you! O our God, did you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? Your people settled here and built this Temple to honor your name. They said, 'Whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, plague, or famine, we can come to stand in your presence before this Temple where your name is honored. We can cry out to you to save us, and you will hear us and rescue us...'

2 Chronicles 20:14-15 further states, "...the Spirit of the Lord came upon one of the men standing there. His name was Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Mattaniah, a Levite who was a descendant of Asaph. He said, Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's."

These passages focus on King Jehoshaphat, who upon hearing that an army was approaching, looked to God for direction and strength, and then called the nation to do the same. I encourage you to read the entire passage when you have time. This is an example of what is required for a powerful prayer.

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Dependence on God. Their prayer showed a deep trust in the Lord. Knowing that victory was beyond their own capabilities, they asked God to intervene.

Focus on His plan. Elijah did things God's way despite difficulties (1 Kings 19:1-2). Jehoshaphat called the nation to fast as they sought the Lord's plan. Because they sought a strategy in God, both men had a clear goal that guided them through difficulties.

Purity of intention. The two leaders had God-centered intentions and the goal of furthering God's purposes.

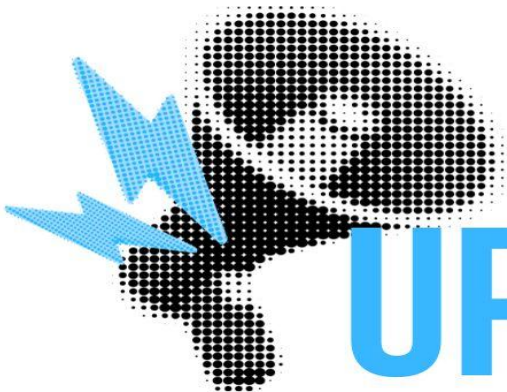
Trust in the faithfulness of God. No one hesitated to publicly ask for divine help. Elijah asked God to test the 450 enemy prophets, and Jehoshaphat told all Israel to pray.

If your prayers seem to have little impact, ask the Lord to help you follow the examples of Elijah and Jehoshaphat, and be ready for the answer.

Suggested Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for giving me a clear example of how to pray for direction and strength. Lord, when I pray, help me focus on you, help my requests align to Your will. I trust in You, knowing that Your purpose for my life is and will always be far better than I can imagine. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.



WE HAD A GOOD TIME AT THE CROSSCUTTERS' GAME IN JULY.



UPCOMING Events

●	AUGUST Entire month	Child Evangelism Fellowship that sponsors the Good News Club
●	WEDNESDAYS 8:00 a.m.	Men's Group meets
●	9 AUGUST 11:30 a.m.	Council meets, following the worship service
●	23 AUGUST 3:00 p.m.	Prayer Walk for Muncy Schools
●	6 SEPTEMBER 6:00 p.m.	Hiawatha Picnic and Cruise

God at Work

CAN ANGER BECOME A DOORWAY TO HEALING?

WITH FELICIA SHEETS

All of us get angry sometimes, and it usually makes us feel uncomfortable or at times restless. We usually think of anger as something to suppress or get rid of as quickly as possible. But what if instead of ignoring it, we allow it to open the door for us to find healing and grace? The next time you get angry, you just need to slow down, take a step back, and allow God to walk beside us within our anger.

Anger is often tied to other emotions and can act as a signal that something more is going on inside us. It may reveal that something seems broken, that something matters to us, or that something in our heart needs our attention. Look at what happens in Genesis 4:6-7, Cain was angry because his offerings were not looked on with favor. When God questions Cain about his anger and warns him, the sin is crouching at the door waiting to take him, but he must rule over it. Cain doesn't take the warning and then kills Abel. When anger arises in our lives, we need to make sure that we are listening to the warning signs, so it does not take control of us and cause us to act in a harmful or sinful way towards God or others.



Think of the last time you got angry, was it righteous anger, or sinful anger? Were you responding to injustice in a way that reflects Jesus' heart in Matthew 21:12-13, or was the anger more rooted in feeling wronged or wanting to get even? There's a significant difference, one is rooted in a love for justice and a desire to honor God, and then the other is often rooted in pride, selfishness, or self-protection. We must be careful when dealing with anger, even righteous anger, because it can easily slip into something more destructive by saying or doing the wrong thing. When we act upon our anger with sin, it never ends well.

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Even if you think your anger is righteous, continue to step back and re-evaluate what is actually going on to see if you are truly acting in a righteous manner, or if you are looking for an excuse or a "way out" of your sinful anger.

The Bible has a few things to say about anger. For example, it explains how we are encouraged to practice patience and self-control, like we hear about in James 1:19-20. We also hear from Paul in Ephesians 4:26-27, who reminds us that anger itself is not always the sin, but what we do with it that matters. When it's left unresolved, anger can take root and grow into bitterness. Anger is clearly dangerous, so how can anger become a doorway, not because anger itself heals, but because when we are honest with ourselves when we are angry, it can lead us toward truth and transformation?

That door can open when we begin asking ourselves honest questions when anger arises. Why am I angry? What is the pain I am feeling in this situation? What might God be inviting me to do next? Sometimes anger points to a need to forgive. Sometimes it points to our need to repent of our sins and turn back to God. Sometimes it simply reminds us that we are carrying too much all on our own.

No matter the cause, we need to remember to bring our frustrations or hurt to God. God can meet us in our anger, walk with us through it, and shape us as we are guided to peace. Bringing our anger to God doesn't mean pretending we are okay. It means praying honestly. It means saying "Lord, I'm hurt, I'm frustrated, please help me understand why." God already knows what is in our hearts and He invites us to bring it into His presence so He can begin changing us from the inside out. Healing begins when we are honest with ourselves and quit pretending that everything is fine all the time.

Do I want to be right, or do I want peace? If you are dealing with anger in your life right now, take a moment to reflect on it. Maybe it's not about just getting rid of your anger, but what is your anger trying to show you? Healing does not begin when anger disappears. Healing begins when we invite God into the places our anger is revealing.

The next time anger arises within you, don't ask "How do I make this feeling go away?" Instead ask, "Lord, what are You trying to show me through this?" That question may become the very doorway through which God brings healing, freedom, and restoration within yourself.

Anniversaries & Birthdays

Anniversaries in AUGUST

<i>Ira & Lori Long</i>	08/03
<i>Daniel & Sarah Rose</i>	08/11
<i>Jim & Patty Woodruff</i>	08/18
<i>Jody & Stephanie Sanders</i>	08/19
<i>Royce & Tiffany Boyles</i>	08/21
<i>William & Whitney Breneisen</i>	08/21

BIRTHDAYS in AUGUST

<i>Lonise Fisher</i>	08/02
<i>Nancy Stump</i>	08/03
<i>Robert Soars</i>	08/04
<i>Mitze Breneisen</i>	08/04
<i>Ken Gottschall, Jr.</i>	08/10
<i>Carter Fish</i>	08/13
<i>Noah Fish</i>	08/13
<i>Evelyn Mowrey</i>	08/14
<i>Barb Vermilya</i>	08/14
<i>Hope Smith</i>	08/17
<i>Patty Jo Edler</i>	08/18
<i>Kathy McCarty</i>	08/19
<i>James Taylor III</i>	08/20
<i>John Vermilya, Jr.</i>	08/21
<i>Paula Fisher</i>	08/25
<i>Carol Bussom</i>	08/26
<i>Nathan Yeagle</i>	08/27
<i>Dorothea Brokaw</i>	08/27
<i>Ken Moyer, Jr.</i>	08/28
<i>Pastor Rob Rice</i>	08/29

DON'T see your
anniversary or
BIRTHDAY?
Please LET US KNOW,
so we can CELEBRATE
WITH YOU!