

PRAYER (1) 6th Sept 2015: The Importance of Prayer – 1 Chronicles 13:1-8,14:8-17 / Acts 2:42-47

Prayer quiz:

- Who can pray? (Anyone)
- When can we pray? (Anytime)
- Where can we pray? (Anywhere)
- What can we pray about? (Anything) (SLIDE)

Email from friend of mine this week (worked with at previous church) about something she helped to pioneer – Prayer Spaces in Schools. Taken off – now hundreds being hosted. What is it? “A Prayer Space is a creative opportunity for children and young people to encounter God in school and for enriching the spiritual life of the school.” Can look like this... (SLIDE)

Why telling you this – love to do this kind of thing here – in time! But reminded me of this really simple truth we’ve just talked about:

Anyone can pray... at any time.... and anywhere.... and we can pray in lots of different ways.

70% of the population still prays.

- More than number who own a house
- Or are married
- Or have blue eyes, or brown eyes
- Or play sport – or attended a sporting event last year – or a concert

Prayer is one of the great universals. Most people do it, even people who don’t claim a faith.

And yet, it’s something we all struggle with. Jesus tells us not to brag about prayer, but let’s be honest most of us don’t like to talk about how much we pray because we wouldn’t want to admit how little we do. Big question - (SLIDE):

If we can talk with God at anytime, anywhere, about anything – then how come we don’t?

Why having this series. **Prayer is our lifeline (SLIDE) – our battery pack (SLIDE) (it’s the engine of our spiritual life) – and it’s our map (SLIDE) –** so we want to give it maximum attention.

See these lessons in life of David.

Big theme of OT – contrast between David and Saul (SLIDE). Not so much goodie and baddie, but success and failure.

Saul looked like a king – tall and strong. But never knew who he was. Called when searching for donkeys. Chosen and hiding among suitcases. When Samuel was late for battle he panicked and made sacrifice himself. Lack of trust in God, lack of belief that he really was God’s chosen person – didn’t really connect with God.

David on the other hand was ‘a man after God’s own heart’. Smaller than Saul, and youngest in family (always a drawback). But he knew who he was.

Key difference was connection to God – see in main passage (1 Chron 13-14, p417):

How connect to God? (SLIDE) 2 things: (1) **HE PRAISED** – we need to worship God. No record of Saul doing that. But David – look at 13:7-8. READ. In 1 Samuel wife told him off ‘you look ridiculous’ – and David ‘I don’t care’.

Not focus for today – other thing: (SLIDE) (2) **HE PRAYED** – pick up images from earlier:

First mention: READ 13:3 – there’s contrast. Saul didn’t pray. And look what happened. David knew that **prayer was his lifeline** (SLIDE). We need to pray – not as a guilt trip, but just need to, it’s our lifeline. It puts God at the centre of our lives.

David wanted ark at centre of Jerusalem because he wanted God at centre of everything. He wanted to ask God about his nation, his family, his kingship. Prayer puts God at the centre. It connects *us* to the source of life – it’s our lifeline.

Second mention – onto ch14 – Philistines attacking Israelites. What does David do? Prayer *and* action – assembled his army – but then did nothing until he’d prayed. READ 14:10a. Not either/or – it’s both/and.

Some people think there are prayers and doers. But not helpful – all prayers and doers. Balance different for each person – but healthy life has praying and doing together.

Here David got the answer: READ 14:10b. So he was able to act knowing God was giving him the victory. **Prayer was his battery pack** (SLIDE). Empowered his actions.

We need prayer to be our battery pack too. Don’t always get the clear answer David did – but if we’re praying, we’re growing, because we’re connected to the One who makes things grow (SLIDE - seeds).

Went to drag racing day – rained all day but saw this engine (SLIDE). I want that kind of engine in my life. Know I’ll only get that through prayer.

Final mention: back to Philistines again. This time gets a very detailed answer: READ 14:14-16a. Note detail about marching in tops of trees – obviously not humans, therefore God’s forces on David’s side.

Prayer is a map (SLIDE). Guides us. Helps us to know God’s will. May not be as detailed as David – but vital to understand God’s plans for our lives.

Called this series: Prayer the great adventure, because it is. Often a negative – ‘need to pray more’ – want us to see as a positive. ‘Want to pray more.’ (SLIDES to follow...)

- Because it’s my lifeline – it connects me to the source of life, to One that makes me come alive
- Because it’s my battery pack – it helps me to grow and to act wisely
- Because it’s my map – shows me where to go

Prayer is life. It's why the early church devoted themselves to it, as our other passage says. 4 signs of a real church – love word, love sharing together (koinonia=oneness), love eating together, and love prayer. It's that important. But my hope and prayer is that we can finish this series seeing it as something we really *want* more of. All had the guilt trips. But this is life! We need it. It's the great adventure.

And let's commit to that adventure. We'll get out what we put in. Lots of opports – not just Sundays – but Compass – and Revive – and maybe other things as well (talk to me). And may prayer be our lifeline, our energy source and our map. Amen.