



*Connect with God.
Connect with each other.
Connect with the community.*

Prayer as a Spiritual Discipline

2/18/24 Sermon by Pastor Nova; Scripture: Romans 8:26-27 (NIV)

As we learn a rhythm of prayer, we become connected to God in new and exciting ways. Prayer is the breath of Christian life.

Can we pray too much? Johnny, a bright boy, told his daddy he'd like to have a baby brother and, along with his request, offered to do whatever he could to help. His dad paused for a moment and then replied, "I'll tell you what, Johnny, if you pray every day for two months for a baby brother, I guarantee that God will give you one!" Johnny responded eagerly to his dad's challenge and went to his bedroom early that night to start praying for a baby brother. He prayed every night for a whole month, but after that time, he began to get skeptical. He checked around the neighborhood and found out that what he thought was going to happen, had never occurred in the history of the neighborhood. You don't pray for two months and then, a new baby brother. So, Johnny quit praying.

After another month, Johnny's mother went to the hospital. When she came back home, Johnny's parents called him into the bedroom. He cautiously walked into the room, not expecting to find anything, and there was a little bundle lying right next to his mother. His dad pulled back the blanket, and there was -- not one baby brother, but two!! His mother had twins! Johnny's dad looked down at him and said, "Now, aren't you glad you prayed?" Johnny hesitated a little and then looked up at his dad and said, "Yes, but aren't you glad I quit when I did? **Prayer changes things.**

How often do we pray outside of Sunday morning or at meals? And how do we define prayer in our lives?

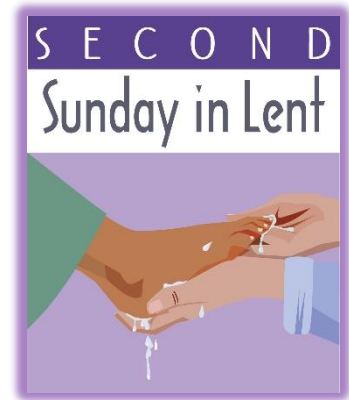
Martin Luther King Jr said: "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."

Three Main points I would like to share: **PRAYER as Spiritual Discipline**

1. Prayer is to connect with God,
2. Prayer gives strength and stamina and
3. Prayer transforms us.

1. Prayer is to connect with God – In the text, we see this idea of the Spirit 'interceding.' Verse 26b says that even when we don't know what to say or how to pray, when we are in tune with the Spirit, the Spirit hears our heart and our faith, not just our words, and the Spirit helps us to pray. The scripture teaches us that the power of prayer is in praying honestly and fervently and that it ought to be a regular practice rather than just an "as needed" or one-time event. Even the most faithful people struggle with prayer. Prayer is communicating with God; it is not only talking and saying our needs but also listening to what God wants. It is not about "*getting it right*," but rather **developing our prayer life as a discipline**. Discipline comes from the same root as disciple – meaning "pupil" (or learner). Since we are followers of Jesus Christ, we learn spiritual practices, like prayer, to help shape our lives by following His example.

~Sermon cont'd on pg. 2



February 25th, 2024

9:00AM – Sunday school for all ages

10:30AM – Traditional

Purple Theory Series: Scripture
Pastor Nova Preaching

The traditional worship is available via
livestream through Calvary's
website homepage.

Go to: calvaryumcmohnton.org or
click on the link below.

**CTRL + CLICK HERE
SUNDAY LIVESTREAM**



Please join us, any time you are available, for our 40-Day Lent Prayer Challenge which began on 2/14/24 (Ash Wednesday) Our prayer for the Calvary Church is a miracle for Revival and Vitality. You can also pray for your own personal miracle. each day, except Sundays) you will have different options of how to participate.

40-Day Lenten Prayer Challenge (Ctrl+Click)

You may join the daily 6PM Zoom meeting, where we will pray daily, and using a designated reader, listen to a chapter of the book, *Draw the Circle*, by Mark Batterson. If you would like to be a designated reader, we ask for you to click on the link **ABOVE** to sign up for the day(s) when you would be willing to volunteer. If you don't have a copy of the book, we will email you a copy of the reading for your designated day.

Zoom Prayer Challenge by Phone

1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 647 829 181#; **Password: 082013**

Zoom Prayer Challenge by PC

<https://zoom.us/j/647829181?pwd=dHlMM09HSmFQcUZ3bEorMUNwRUNkZz09>

Meeting ID: 647 829 181

Password: 082013



40-Day Lenten Walk Prayer Challenge (Ctrl + Click)

- Join the 40-Day Lent Prayer Walk Challenge. This will happen daily at the church at 8:30AM, with Pastor Nova joining you if she has no other commitments that day. First, there will be prayer and a reading from the *Upper Room*. You may walk around the church, around the streets of Mohnton, or you may just sit in the church for the devotional reading and to pray. We ask that you click the link **ABOVE** to sign up for the days when you would like to be the designated reader for the Lent Prayer Walk Challenge.
- The last option is for people who can't make the other two options. In that case, we ask that you commit to finding a daily time for prayer on your own.



~Sermon cont'd from pg. 1

Dr. Newburg quoted an anonymous author: *"The point of prayer is to connect with God. The goal is not to get answers to our requests but rather to deepen our relationship with the One who not only knows the answers but will also guide us to the correct questions. Intimacy takes time and concentration".*

John Bunyan said: *"He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day."*

Prayer is to connect with God.

2. Prayer gives strength and stamina –V.26a *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness."* **PRAYER makes a Christian strong and not just strong but will give us stamina.** When it comes to spiritual disciplines like prayer, the more we exercise it, the stronger and healthier we become. Prayer is something that everyone can do. *Isaiah 40:31NASB, "But they that wait upon the Lord; shall renew strength; They shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.* 1Thes. 5:17 reminds us to pray without ceasing. Like breathing, we should not stop praying, because it will make us strong and gives us the endurance to follow what God called/is calling us to do.

In the book *Another Way* by Lewis, Williams & Baker, the first line in their manifesto is this: *There is a future that mourns if you and I do not step up to our purpose. We cannot step up to our purpose if we are weak. What is our purpose? To do the calling God gave us and be the person God called us to be.*

We should be the best version of ourselves in the likeness of Jesus Christ. **Prayer gives strength and stamina.**

~Sermon cont'd on pg. 3

~Sermon cont'd from pg. 2

3. Prayer transforms us – (V27b) *the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.*

I don't know about you, but when I come to God, I have my wants, and I have my agenda. Jesus, in Gethsemane before he was arrested, prayed: *Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.*

We can only be transformed through prayer. In prayer, we are exchanging our will and surrendering it to God's will. Prayer transforms us to God's heart and to God's wants. We become in-line with God's will. Romans 12:2, NIV: *Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing, and perfect will.*

But how do we pray? Jesus in Matthew 6:9a says: *This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father.*

Our Father - two words that make up the foundation of prayer.

Our - not for oneself, but for a community, a family
Father – being in relationship with God through Jesus Christ, having accepted Jesus as Lord & Savior.

John 1:12-13: *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

John 3:5-7: *Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*

Prayer connects us with God. Prayer gives us strength and stamina. Prayer transforms us.

Let us pray...In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



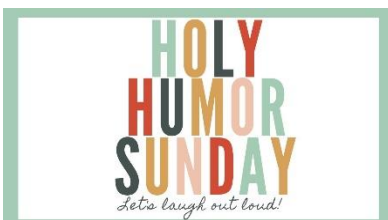
March 24th @ 10:30AM: A joyful celebration of Christ's arrival into Jerusalem, with palms waving, joyful hymns and a special choir anthem. The service will be livestreamed & available through Calvary's website homepage & Facebook. All are welcome.

March 28th @ 7PM: An experiential service in Calvary's lower-level Social Hall (handicap accessible), including scripture, hymns, sharing Holy Communion, special music, and reflection. The service will be available via Zoom. All are welcome.



March 29th @ 7PM: An evening service in Calvary's sanctuary recalling & reflecting on the passion and death of Christ through readings and hymns. All are welcome.

March 31st @ 10:30AM: Join us for a joy-filled service rejoicing in Christ's triumph over the grave. The bell choir and senior choir will present special music, and we will share in the fellowship of Holy Communion. The service will also be livestreamed & available through Calvary's website & Facebook.



For centuries many faith traditions observed the Sunday after Easter as a "day of joy and laughter" to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. The custom was rooted in the musings of early church theologians (like Augustine) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. "*Risus paschalis* - the Easter laugh," the early theologians called it. Calvary will celebrate **Holy Humor Sunday on April 7th during the 10:30AM service**, with children & youth participating.



25 – Hank Shannon
1431 Fayette Ave.
Reading, PA 19607

25 – Rich Dodson
11 Harry Ave.
Reading, PA 19607

27 – Mark Webster
21 Overlook Rd.
Morgantown, PA 19543

27 – John Gingrich
1 Reading Drive, Apt. 345
Wernersville, PA 19565

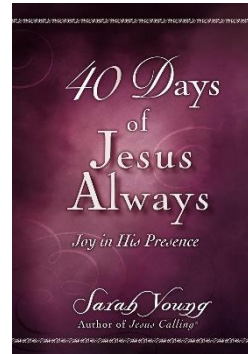
28 – Dave Spangler
644 Highlands Hammock Dr.
Poinciana, FL 34759

29 – Carrie Diedrich
484 Hain Rd.
Sinking Spring, PA 19608

~MARCH~

01 – Judy Kline
755 Fairmont Ave.
Mohnton, PA 19540

Prepare Your Heart & Mind for Easter



A free Lenten devotional, *40 Days of Jesus Always*, is available for pick in the Gathering area. [One per household, please.]

The devotional booklet includes daily words of love, encouragement, and guidance, written to us, as if from Jesus.



~ SAVE THE DATE ~

COMMUNITY EVENT

MARCH 23rd @ 9:30AM

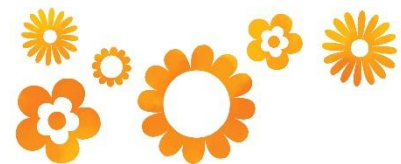
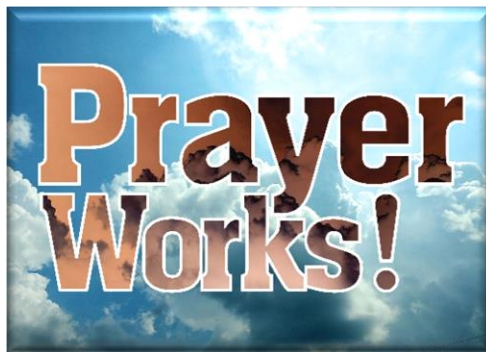
RAIN OR SHINE @ CALVARY!



DAYLIGHT
SAVINGS
BEGINS THIS

SUNDAY, MARCH 10TH.

Mark your calendar now (or put an alarm on your phone) to set your clock(s) FORWARD 1 hour before you go to sleep Saturday night (3/09). You don't want to be late for Sunday school and church!



The Eastern PA Conference offers four camping locations with a wonderful myriad of camping themes. **NOW** is the time to be looking over the various websites to check out their electronic brochures and registration areas. **NOW** is the time to start talking to your brothers, sisters, and friends about experiencing a camp adventure this summer!

Partial scholarship funds are available through Calvary Church (one scholarship per child per season). If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Matthew at 717-917-5342 or christianed.calvmohn@gmail.com.

Below are the links to each of the camps: (Ctrl + Click)

[Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center](#)

[Innabah Camp & Retreat Center](#)

[Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center](#)

[Carson Simpson Farm Christian Camp](#)