

3 - Intercession and Petition

- Often intimidating for many people
 - “Isn’t it selfish to pray for myself and what I want?”
 - “I don’t pray very well.” “What if I sound silly?”
- A very important part of the life of the church, so we want to work toward greater comfort
- Importance of intercession and petition
 - Prayer is powerful - Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)
 - Prayer is formative/rejuvenating - In the morning, while it was still very dark, [Jesus] got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. (Mk 1:35)
 - Prayer focuses our thoughts and hearts - Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. (1Thess 5:16-19)
 - Prayer is revolutionary - But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matt 5:44)
- Healing power of prayer/laying on of hands
 - Scriptures are filled with healing and miraculous works tied to prayer
 - Science is conflicted on the issue
 - Faith healers like Benny Hinn are controversial at best
 - Anecdotal, but most of the faithful I have spoken to about the efficacy of prayer believe in it
 - What is happening when we pray for healing? What is going on in the scriptures?
- As Episcopalians, what does the laying on of hands and healing prayer mean to us?
 - Confirmation/Ordination/Anointing of the Sick/Burial
 - Holy Eucharist
- Prayer is always answered?
 - So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. (Lk 11:9; Matt 7:7)
 - So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mk 11:24)
- So what does it mean when what we pray for doesn’t happen?
 - Did we not pray enough, the right way? Did we not believe enough?
 - Does God not want peace and healing in the world?
- Similarly, when a televangelist tells us to send money and we will be blessed and then, after we do, we get rich, does that mean God made us rich?
- Is there really any reason to pray for things?
- My thoughts
 - God has defeated the power of sin in the cross and resurrection, but we still live in a world filled with brokenness
 - God is healing that brokenness, but until all is finally restored, it will be difficult, this is also promised us
 - There is suffering in the life of the Christian, God promises that as well as an answer to our prayers
 - There is mystery to live into there...that is holy ground for us.
- Let’s spend some time in prayer...