



Hillside Monthly Dispatch

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

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Modeling the Truth of God's Word

January 2017

Pray without Ceasing

From the Pastor's Desk

Being in Constant Prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:17

One of my earliest and most lasting memories of my dad was seeing him praying on Sunday mornings. Though the house I grew up in was relatively large, it still lacked space for a family of seven to live in. Thus my father was relegated to our secondary living room in the front of the house.

Every Sunday morning, my dad would get up as early as five in the morning and go down to his front room to prepare for Sunday worship. He would put on one of his favorite Christian records and blare it throughout the house and work on final preparations for his sermon.

By the time we got up and went downstairs, we would generally find my dad praying. There was one thing you did not do – you did not disturb his prayer time. Because of the location, this very private meeting with the Lord was on display in front of his entire family. He seemingly prayed long prayers and one could just look at him and know that he was pouring his heart out to God.

Many who knew my dad knew him to be a doer. If you wanted something done, either he would do it himself or get others to come along and help him do it. But many may have not known this side of him, the prayer warrior who was one who knew to put his absolute trust in the Lord and then get up from his prayer couch and go do the work of a pastor. My dad loved to pray and he would pray in just about any venue and at any opportunity when asked of him.

As I consider prayer, it is clear that many in our current Christian culture lack the know-how or drive to pray. I have had people come up to me over the years and ask how to pray, or when to pray, or how often it should be done. There is clearly a gap in understanding that is present, but that gap probably has more to do with the lack of commitment to reading God's word and seeing what He says about it.

As I consider praying there is a passage in Scripture that pretty much sums up what our approach to prayer ought to be, and it is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. However it is important that I give you the entire passage surrounding it to give context.

Paul wrote, "We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish

Upcoming Events and Meetings

Jan. 1, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

Jan. 7, 8:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast

The men share a meal, then engage in a Bible discussion.

Jan. 14, Noon – Right to Life Rally, Concord

Rally is at 11:15 a.m. with a March for Life down Main St. at 11:45 a.m.

Weekly:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 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. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." (1 Thess. 5:12-22, ESV)

In this passage Paul is finishing off his letter and, in doing so, he is taking time to encourage the Thessalonian church to do a few things. First, to respect those who work for the Gospel and hold them in high regard. Second, to actively work and promote the spiritual growth of others in the church, thus they are told to admonish, encourage, help, be patient, and monitor Christian conduct. Lastly, Paul encourages them to keep their focus on God by encouraging them to rejoice in all situations, pray without ceasing, be submissive to the Holy Spirit, to be diligent in guarding the faith, and to keep themselves from evil.

It is this last one in which we find our command to pray without ceasing. What does that look like? How is that to be played out in our lives? Well there is an old saying in which

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On the web at <http://www.hillsidebaptistnh.org>

Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

Christians are called to pray in two ways. We are to pray at scheduled times in our lives and we are to pray all the rest of the time. Also, there are two other times in which we should pray. When we feel like it and when we don't feel like it. The reality is that Christians are called to pray always.

The New International Version (NIV) Bible translates this passage as praying continually. The New Living Translation (NLT) says never stop praying. The Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) tells us to pray constantly. And each of these translations are relaying to us the need to pray without stopping or to pray without ceasing. That means we definitely pray at scheduled times such as our daily devotional, before our meals, at church, at Bible studies, and gatherings where Christians come together.

But also it means we pray when we are stressed, or in pain, or in despair. We pray with our eyes closed most of the times, but to pray without ceasing is to talk to God while driving into work in the morning while keeping our eyes on the road. To pray without ceasing is to call God into each and every situation whether good or bad.

Praying without ceasing is to lift the name of God up in presence of others and in the quietness of your bedroom. To pray without ceasing is to ask God for wisdom at the moment you are stifled or perplexed. To pray for guidance at the very moment you do not know what to do or to ask for His interjection and support at the very moment it is desperately needed.

As Christians our prayer lives are exactly as we want them to be, but not necessarily how God wants them to be. We take in as much of God as we want and no more, and our prayer lives reveal to what extent that is true. But if you noticed in the whole passage, we see that in verses 16-22 Paul starts that section off with "rejoice always" which is intrinsically linked to our prayer life.

Spurgeon, the great preacher of the late 1800s, noticed a connection to one's heart for rejoicing with one's prayer life. He stated, "Observe what it follows. It comes immediately after the precept, 'Rejoice evermore;' as if that command had somewhat staggered the reader, and made him ask, 'How can I always rejoice?' and, therefore, the apostle appended as answer, 'Always pray.'

The more praying the more rejoicing. Prayer gives a channel to the pent-up sorrows of the soul, they flow away, and in their stead streams of sacred delight pour into the heart. At the same time, the more rejoicing the more praying; when the heart is in a quiet condition, and full of joy in the Lord, then also will it be sure to draw nigh unto the Lord in worship. Holy joy and prayer act and react upon each other." (Sermon No. 1039, March 10, 1872)

How is your prayer life? I guarantee your heart reflects your prayer life. If you are one who rejoices in the Lord then it is likely that you have a good prayer life that is in constant communion with God. If you are defeated, depressed, forlorn, sad, and lonely, then it is likely you do not have an active prayer life in which you are praying all the time.

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Men's Breakfast

The first Men's Breakfast of the New Year is on Saturday, January 7th at 8:00 a.m. That is as far from the first Sunday as the first Saturday can ever get.

Start off the new year right by coming on up the hill and joining the guys for food, fellowship, and a Bible discussion. We are currently working our way through the Book of Judges, a momentous time in Jewish history.

Sleeping in may seem more appealing but what you really need is fellowship with other believers who can encourage you in your walk with the Lord.

Right to Life Rally and March

On January 22, 1973 in a 7-2 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that a right to privacy under the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment extended to a woman's decision to have an abortion. Since then, millions of babies have been killed before they were born.

The March for Life movement has been working across the U.S. for years to educate people about the tragedy of abortion both for the mother and the child and the need to stop abortion on demand. For more information about the New Hampshire group, go to <http://nhrtl.org/mfl2017/>.

The local Catholic churches always have a strong turnout, so dress appropriately for the weather, and let's show them that Baptists also care about this issue.

January 14, 2017

11:15 a.m. – Rally outside the State House, N. Main St., Concord

11:45 a.m. – March for Life along Main St. from the Capitol to St. John the Evangelist (about 15-20 minutes)

Midday – Refreshments for marchers at St. John the Evangelist

1:00 p.m. – Keynote speaker, Jennifer Lahl, founder and president of The Center for Bioethics and Culture Network, at St. John the Evangelist

Property and Space Patrol

A few snow storms have landed on us recently (like Christmas Eve) but have been easily plowed. Don't let a little bad weather keep you away from Sunday Worship.

It was recently announced that the church mortgage has finally been paid off. Praise the Lord!!! A "Burn the Mortgage" Party will be held later this year.

✠ Pastor Al

Hoo-ah!

The following article comes from *Our Daily Bread*, the daily devotional booklet produced by Our Daily Bread Ministries. It was written by David Roper, a frequent contributor.

The U.S. Army's expression "hoo-ah" is a guttural response barked when troops voice approval. Its original meaning is lost to history, but some say it is derived from an old

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Hoo-ah (from p. 2)

acronym, HUA (Heard, Understood, and Acknowledged). I first heard the word in basic training.

Many years later it found its way into my vocabulary again when I began to meet on Wednesday mornings with a group of men to study the Scriptures. One morning one of the men—a former member of the 82nd Airborne Division—was reading one of the psalms and came to the notation "selah" that occurs throughout the psalms. Instead of reading "selah," however, he growled "hoo-ah," and that became our word for selah ever after.

No one knows for certain what selah actually means. Some say it is only a musical notation. It often appears after a truth that calls for a deep-seated, emotional response. In that sense hoo-ah works for me.

This morning I read Psalm 68:19: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, the God who is our salvation! Selah." (NASB).

Imagine that! Every single morning God loads us upon His shoulders and carries us through the day. He is our salvation. Thus safe and secure in Him, we've no cause for worry or for fear. "Hoo-ah!" I say.

Pastor's Desk, from p. 2

It is clear that, after two thousand years of Christian history, religious groups have unintentionally made prayer almost too mystical and mysterious for some to grasp. However, to pray is nothing more than to spend time talking with God, presenting to Him our praises and petitions. Prayer is to spend time with the God of the universe who wants to spend time with us.

The opportunity to enter into the throne room of God in prayer is one of the most profound blessings we have as His children. Yet it is one of the easiest things we can ever do, so do not let anything or anyone rob you of this privilege.

Don't let sin, pain, anger, or bitterness rob you of one of the greatest joys afforded to us in this life. Instead, embrace the command to pray without ceasing and you will know joy and you will rejoice in the Lord God, for you will have a strong relationship with the One who loves you so.

God bless,
✠ Pastor Jim

Early Days of the Christian Faith

The Conversion of Constantine

The following excerpt is from *Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity*.

Throughout the fourth century, relations between the church, the emperor, and pagan religions were continually changing. Emperor Constantine's defeat of Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in the autumn of 312, and his interpretation of that victory as the response of the Christian God to his prayer for help, propelled church and state into a new age for which neither was prepared.

Out of this new relationship between the Christian church and the Christian emperor stemmed the history of church-

state relations in the later Roman Empire and throughout the Middle Ages.

Constantine treated Christianity as the favored, but not official, religion of the Empire. He granted immunities to the clergy and lavished gifts on the church. In his letters and edicts, he spoke as if the Christian God were his own.

It is important to understand that Constantine's previous religion was the worship of the Unconquered Sun. Retaining some pagan symbols was a compromise with his much more numerous pagan subjects.

When in 321, Constantine made the first day of the week a holiday, he called it "the venerable day of the Sun" (Sunday). When the pagan symbols eventually disappeared, the Unconquered Sun was the last to go.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to the following people who are celebrating another orbit around the Sun:

- 1/11 Pastor Jim Robertson
- 1/21 Cynthia Ward



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on any couple who is celebrating a wedding anniversary this month.

If we missed your anniversary, please let us know.

Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It will be our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus our Lord.

Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillsidebaptistnh.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is Jan. 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the New Hampshire Baptist Association, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



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