

The Parchment

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Does Prayer Matter?

I fear something has happened to prayer. You may do this to prayer yourself. Somebody tells you their problem and you don't know what to say. Or you don't have time to truly listen. You may blurt out, "I'll pray for you!" Whether or not prayer actually happens may not matter as much at that moment. In this instance prayer becomes a sentiment. And that's my fear, that prayer becomes mere sentimentality toward one another.

Prayer, of course, is much, much more. In its simplest definition prayer is communicating with God. When we say we will pray for someone we are telling them we will communicate on their behalf with God about their situation. We are also communicating to them that we care enough to stop what our brains are churning over to consider their needs before God. This last thought is important to ponder. In college I remember often querying that if God already knows what we or others need, then why pray? God is going to do what God will do, so it may not matter what I do.

When Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, he mentioned how they do not need to repeat themselves incessantly to be heard by God: *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him* (Matthew 6:7-8). Notice the point is not that God knows so we do not need to tell Him. Rather, the point is that since God knows we do not have to repeat ourselves to be heard. Nor do we need to worry that He might be surprised. He already knows! Something does happen, though, when we tell Him. We connect with God. We experience His care for us and others. We find peace in Him (see Philippians 4:6-7). Our hearts turn toward Him and away from the concerns.

In these ways and more prayer does matter. Let's show Him and each other that it does. Join us each Sunday at 11AM in the FC103 to pray for our church and each other.