

Thought For The Day

24th September 2020

I was chatting with my long time friend John, the other evening and the conversation turned to prayer. He is from a Brethren background so is well used to extemporary prayer. But then he became an Anglican vicar and so is also well versed in liturgical prayer. We were talking about how sometimes people spend a lot of their prayer telling God what the situation is. We remembered the old story, (did it really happen? I don't know!) of the man who started his prayer, "I don't know if you saw the paper this morning Lord..." We can laugh at that, but we often forget that the Lord knows a lot more about the people and situations we are praying about than we do. He knows every little detail about the individual and the circumstances. He is aware of things which are hidden from the rest of us. So we don't have to explain anything to Him

It's also true that the Lord knows what to do for the best for each individual or situation. His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Is 55:7-8). If we are not careful our prayers turn into instructions as to what He must do and in our flawed wisdom we ask for something which is not the highest good. All we really have to do is lift people and situations up to the Lord, He sees our hearts, knows how much we care and responds with what He in His great love and wisdom, knows is best.

There is one more pointer for us as we pray for people. This hit me with some force a few years ago. I realised that when Paul prayed for people he had a very clear focus. It was their spiritual health and well being that he was most concerned with. Read these prayers of Paul in Ephesians 1:15-23, 3:14-19 and Colossians 1:9-14 and you will see that his constant prayer for others is '.... that you might know Him better', and '..that you might grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love.. that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.' If you have the time, read those passages in some different versions. Not only might you be prompted to echo these prayers for your friends and family, but will realise that these rich amazing prayers are for you too and use them to express the longing of your own heart to experience the best God has for you.

I do of course still pray for the temporal things, my sisters bad knee and my friend's struggle with depression. But now I try to make sure my main focus, the thing that the Lord knows I really long for to bless those I lift to Him in prayer, is that they might know Him better.

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Or ring: (01743) 583215

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