

Prayer Involves Sharing With Others

Rethinking our expectations regarding prayer ...

Too often we are asked to pray for particular individuals because of some crisis. There's a death, or cancer, or a family whose life has been turned up-side-down.

What is the expectation? Some think prayer is about winning God over and willing our expectations for a favourable outcome.

If that's the common understanding, maybe we need to change our awareness of what it means to pray, or what it means for prayers to be answered.

When I'm asked for such prayers, I'm honoured that someone in pain is sharing what is a very difficult time. I'm able to assure them they don't have to face this crisis alone.

Shared prayer is also a reminder to all of us that God is present and offers us courage, hope and strength when we feel drained. Remember the "Footsteps in the Sand"? When we see only one set of tracks, that's "when He carried us through".

Many don't give much thought to what faith is about until they are confronted by the extremes of life. Then, whether it be the extreme of pain or of joy, we may begin to contemplate the possibility that there is something bigger than us, beyond us but always available to us, that is like a promise to us. With our questions, our doubts, our expressions of anger or joy, and our sense of mystery, our sense of faith is slowly nurtured.

The wisdom shared by our elders, the insights gained through the stories of Scripture, the truths learned as we move through the world of nature, give us glimpses into the broader context in which we find ourselves.

Prayer is about inviting others to share our story. It is about sensing some awareness of a Greater Power. It is about the mystery of experiencing reserves of courage and strength when we would otherwise feel depleted.

(written by Joyce Sasse, 2010)

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