

**Vision for a Prayer-Filled Life**  
**Prayer Series**  
**11/9/14**

Welcome/intro/thanks for joining us

Kick-off week 1 of our series on prayer, tackling something that many of us do at least a little bit or occasionally

But one that has a whole lot of different expressions and different experiences

And as a companion to our time here on Sunday mornings and to our discussions and studies that we'll do in small groups

We've selected two great, great books that go along with this series—one's called "Too Busy NOT to Pray" and the other one is called simply "Prayer."

"Too Busy Not to Pray" is the main book for this series

it's a great book whether you're just getting started in prayer or you've been doing it for a while and need some fresh insight or ideas or direction

"Prayer" is one of the most significant books on prayer in the last 30 years

and it's for folks who feel fluent in prayer and are really for a challenge to think about a more rigorous and serious engagement in prayer

Both of these books will really round out and work with what we're talking about here on Sunday mornings and will stretch and encourage you in your prayer life

Check those out at the book table, \$10 or whatever you can afford to pay

We're going to spend these next several weeks into Christmas talking about prayer and hopefully helping each of us to grow in our prayer lives

And one of the things that's challenging as we talk about prayer is

First that our personalities deeply affect how we pray and what kinds of questions or expectations we have about prayer—artists and engineers all pray, but it might all look different!

And secondly that we've got such a range of experiences with prayer and such a range of comfort level with prayer

In my small group we were talking this past week about what our earliest exposure as kids was to this whole idea of prayer

A couple of people were deeply traumatized by a childhood prayer that I think together we should all agree to ban from ever using with our kids

Any prayer with someone under the age of 12 that includes the line “and if I die before I wake” is just a little unsettling for a little person, don’t you think?

Were any of you permanently scarred by your parents praying about your untimely death right at bed-time?

All of you people probably need to go see the prayer team and get prayer for your permanent psychological damage and PTSD from bed-time with your parents!

We had one or two folks in our small group that had their parents do the bed-time prayer thing

and they eventually changed the words to make them a little bit kinder and gentler

And they talk about how a sweet, regular bed-time prayer routine was a source of comfort for them growing up.

Some people in my small group talked about how they had these family dynamics around who prayed, especially at big holidays were pretty predictable

It was always the oldest male head-of-household who prayed and there were two things that described it: always too long and always the same thing!

Maybe you have your own memories of that

And then we had a couple of other people who grew up in a real liturgical church tradition where scripted and formal and ritual prayers were used all the time

And they reported that prayer in their families were really rote and kind of just a check-the-box experience to say the right words, sometimes it felt like the magic words, over the food before you dug in.

And for those folks the message about prayer was it was often just something you endured and put up—a necessary evil before you got to eat

And still further down the spectrum of experiences we had one person in our small group who shared that his dad was an atheist

and he kind of mocked and ridiculed the whole idea of prayer, so he started off in a significant deficit when it came to engagement and trusting that prayer was worth anything

My guess is that you might be able to resonate with your own early story or memory of prayer situated somewhere in there

And as we continued to talk about prayer all kinds of great questions and issues around prayer came up, questions like:

Why should we pray if God already has a plan? That's a question about prayer that comes up a lot—why pray if whatever's going to happen is going to happen?

Another one: What about un-answered prayers? Especially the ones that we think a loving God should answer?

Should I be praying for God to change the circumstances around me or should I just be praying for strength to endure whatever comes my way?

This morning, as we get started with this series, I want to start to tackle this 'why pray' question as a part of a bigger vision for a prayer-filled life

And I'm going to weave together my own story of prayer and Scripture hopefully in a way that will help us to engage with the why question

and catch a vision together for what a prayer-filled life could look like and why it has been so incredibly life-changing for so many people

Let me tell you my story, I've shared bits and pieces along the way before but hopefully it'll be helpful to share:

This isn't true for many of you, but my parents had a very active and engaged prayer life—both privately as well as publicly

My mom tells this story of going away on a church retreat where the speaker was talking about the essential nature of a dedicated daily time with God.

He told them to make a list of people you should be praying for you like spouses and kids and family and friends, and read the Bible for 15 minutes every day and pray through that list of people

That was the picture of the daily quiet time—and this totally worked for my mom.

She decided to start getting up about 30 minutes earlier and reading for 15 minutes and praying through her prayer list

She came home, taught it to my dad, they both started doing this dedicated time of personal prayer and Bible reading every day

In fact, some of my earliest memories are of waking up and wandering into my mom's room and my mom would be sitting up in her bed, glasses on and hair all matted and just-woke-up looking

And she'd be hunched over her Bible, reading or praying through her prayer list—  
and as her prayer list grew, her time with God grew and grew and she woke up earlier and earlier

So when I became a Christian and got baptized at age 10

the very first thing my mom did was sit me down and explain to me that now that I was a Christian I needed to have my own daily quiet time

So she worked with me to develop my own list of people, I re-found that list a few years ago and her name was suspiciously near the top!

And she encouraged me as a 10-year-old to start having my own quiet time

Now, I don't know how familiar YOU are with 10-year-old boys, but for those of you who are currently fluent in 10-year-old boy, how disciplined do they tend to be?

Not just not very, we're talking not-at-all!

But at this point in my life I can say without a doubt that it was one of the best gifts anyone has ever given to me.

For most of us, someone has to help us and give us some guidance in the most important areas of life

As an aside: that's why we're doing a mentoring class next week.

We want to equip everyone to be good stewards of whatever influence you might have whether that be at home or at work or in places where you serve or volunteer.

We need people in our lives who can champion us and help us—check out that mentoring class information in your bulletin

My mom helped to mentor me in prayer, even if I wasn't quite ready to engage with it on a regular basis yet.

My dad's in the Navy, we moved to Spain for 3 years, I was there for middle school, beautiful country

Came back to the States summer before 10<sup>th</sup> grade into Northern Virginia/suburban Washington D.C. frenetic chaos after being in a quiet beach-town for 3 years in Spain

And I went through culture shock in a deep and significant way and I was totally overwhelmed and intimidated by my school

I was moving from a school of a couple hundred students to a school of around 4,000 students!

It was big and I was totally overwhelmed and freaked out and I struggled my whole sophomore year to make any friends at school whatsoever.

And at that really low point in my life, I looked at this Bible, with this prayer list that I'd occasionally used or checked in on every so often prior

And I decided that this was going to save me—help me to get through this difficult time.

And I started praying and reading my Bible every morning before I went off to school as a scared and overwhelmed 15-year-old  
who didn't know what else to do as it felt like to me in my little world my life was falling apart.

And I prayed and read and prayed and read just 4, 5, 6, 7 days a week for weeks and weeks and weeks on end

And what happened in terms of my circumstances and my situation is something I think we can all relate to: NOTHING!

My whole sophomore year of high school was an experience of isolation among 4,000 people and for an extrovert that's like death

In fact, I even remember telling my Sunday school class at church that it seemed like when I spent time waking up to pray and read the Bible my days were WORSE than the other days!

So if nothing was changing in my circumstances, you know why I kept doing it?

I kept doing it because I was experiencing something inside of me that was happening as I kept showing up day after day after day

And it was an experience of something that Jesus had promised years before in the Scriptures  
and it's something that we've been talking about and inviting you all into this morning

Jesus says this in Matthew 11:

***<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."***

I didn't feel it every day, it wasn't like I had these grand visions of angels and Jesus coming to me every morning

But over time, I had a sense that in my time in prayer and Scripture I was starting to get a sense of who God was

And over time, many months and years, as I met with Jesus, I found him many mornings to be exactly as advertised: gentle, humble, rest-giving

I found rest for my soul—and no, stuff wasn't going like I wanted it to go and no I wasn't thrilled with my life and the situation and how I was feeling

And yes, I still wanted things to be different, but in the mean time, this was a safe, strong, quiet, sheltered place

And I had a sense that God had not abandoned me, that Jesus was walking with me through all of this—HE was WITH me and I was getting to KNOW and TRUST in his goodness, his gentleness, his character

and that he would see me through it if I would trust in him

And as I've been thinking about this passage and my story this past week, one of the things that's struck me is the comprehensiveness of the offer from Jesus

The invitation is to everyone who needs it, to come and find rest

and there's this exchange that's on offer and it's permanently on the table

You and I, we bring out worries, our anxieties, our “my life isn't going the way I want it to go” or “this situation really stinks” or “I'm so mad and frustrated with this person or situation”

We bring all that stuff that's churning either on the outside and all around us or on the inside in our hearts and minds and lives

That's OUR burden, that's what many of us carry around with us

And we exchange it for HIS yoke

In Jesus' day humans wore yokes that made carrying a heavy load easier—that was the function or the purpose of a yoke on a human being: to make carrying or pulling an impossibly heavy load much, much easier

So the image here is of you and I carrying around a heavy load

And Jesus comes alongside us and he says, “I see you're carrying quite a load there. Not sure how long you can do that. How about you give me YOUR burdens and I give you MY yoke, this tool to make carrying the burden easier, lighter”

Not that life with Jesus always makes everything magically better, in fact sometimes along the way it can feel like following Jesus makes things more complicated

But the offer is on the table for you and me at every moment of every hour: you can take all your stuff and EXCHANGE IT for HIS yoke

And what I've been thinking about all this week is how much stuff I end up carrying around all the time

And how much of my life I've wasted trying to have a *direct* relationship with my worries and burdens

when *Jesus at every moment of every day is offering to have me exchange my direct relationship with my burdens for an direct relationship with him and an indirect relationship with my burdens [REPEAT]*

See normally my life looks like this:

I carry around a bunch of stuff, trying to balance all these plates and manage all these tasks or challenges or navigate disappointments  
and I try to enjoy the good things along the way as best I can  
and some of these don't feel like burdens, they feel like opportunities, they feel like I'm advancing or winning or doing well, but it's all mixed in with everything else that I'm carrying around

And if we're honest, some of the burdens that we carry are stuff we have no control over

BUT SOME OF IT is the direct result of our own stupidity, right?

And what I do is I *relate directly* to these things that I'm carrying around with me—this is my primary reality

and occasionally I try to shout over top of them to God, check in, thank him for stuff and ask him for stuff and then move on back with my day which mostly consists of me carrying my burdens as best I can

But Jesus is calling us to make this exchange: that we give him our burdens, our stressors, even our opportunities, which is hard for some of us, whatever they are—he's glad to take them!

And the good news is that we hand them over to him and he doesn't then inspect each one and decide whether he will accept them or not

Jesus is not looking at the stuff you're carrying and deciding whether or not you DESERVE for him to exchange your burdens for his yoke

The truth of the matter is that deserving is never a part of the conversation—it is all grace upon grace upon grace that he comes to us: reckless, extravagant love and grace

And so he says, "I see you carrying all these burdens around with you—give those to me, all of them!"

Get those out of the way so that we relate to him directly and first—make HIM our primary point of reference rather than our burdens

Such an important word here: *come!* Just come! Just approach me! Just move towards me just a little bit! Just look to me!

He's talking to everyone here!

He's talking to you if you're a church person—if you're the person who's grown up in church and done church your whole life  
you've gone through all the motions, you've sung all the songs, you know the stories, you know the drill

But have you ever really COME TO JESUS? Just come to him with all your burdens and stuff and laid it at his feet?

Not just recited a rote religious prayer but just said,  
“here's all this stuff I'm carrying around with me, I'm giving you all that stuff and I'm coming to be with you!”

AND he's talking to those of you who aren't very religious, don't get it, struggle to connect or trust or believe

He's saying to you, right now, come—everyone who's weary or broken or tired or who's carrying stuff into this day, Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014—come to me, he says, and I will give you rest

I remember one time I was talking with someone who'd been in the midst of a really stressful couple of months

And some of it was there was some things he was supposed to be doing, and he knew it, and he didn't want to do it, so he wasn't doing it.

And so he didn't want to talk to God about it because he was putting something off that he knew he was supposed to be doing.

And he was kind of hiding and running from Jesus—hiding behind busyness, hiding behind his Xbox, hiding behind any excuse he could find, any of you ever do that?

But finally after several weeks he came to his senses and he realized running and hiding from God wasn't going to make this situation any better, it was only increasing his burden and it wasn't going to go away on its own.

So finally he stopped running away from Jesus and carrying this burden with him that he was trying to ignore and he prayed

And he prayed a prayer that sounded a lot like this one: Lord, here's this thing, I know I'm supposed to do it, but it's overwhelming me, I'm tired of it, and I'm turning to you with it

And what he said was it was like he just barely glanced in the rear view mirror and Jesus came running towards him with peace, grace and mercy

And in that particular instance, God just took care of the problem that he'd been floundering around in for weeks.

Doesn't always happen, but what does always happen when we come to Jesus in prayer is that if we're willing to actually meet with him

There's a real transaction available to us—to put our stuff down and exchange it for his yoke which is easy and his burden, which is light

And notice it says that we **LEARN** from him

we become his students, he becomes our teacher, we learn how to navigate through life with the lens and power of Jesus, we engage with him, are taught and shaped by him

Because at some point it IS helpful to talk about these burdens we've given over to him, right? Not everything that we're carrying around or hoping for is healthy, wise, good, or is ours to carry

We have to learn from him and he is generous and gracious to teach us.

Why pray? Why a prayer-filled life? So many reasons, but we're starting with this morning

Because every moment of every day Jesus offers us this great, deeply personal interaction—this honest, raw, genuine, loving relationship where we approach him with our burdens

And we exchange our burdens for his yoke  
our stressors for his yoke that makes carrying those stressors easier and lighter

And the only way we engage in that exchange, the only way we access that offer from Jesus is by approaching him in prayer

And notice that this whole way of thinking about prayer then is not just about me being the one who's active and talking.

Notice that this is an exchange—that I'm meeting in real-time with a divine and holy Someone who's hearing me as I approach him

and then he's receiving me, engaging with me, personally, deeply, in real-time, and he's giving me a gift, I'm receiving something from him

Most of all his presence, his love, his strength which we talked about last week, his yoke that makes my burden lighter

And he's TEACHING ME how to live this life, I'm learning from him what it means to be a child of God

C.S. Lewis once said “prayer doesn’t change God, prayer changes me!” We can overstate that, we’ll talk about it in a second.

But the core insight is exactly correct:

if we evaluate prayer strictly on whether or not it DOES what we WANT IT TO DO in our CIRCUMSTANCES

MOST of us will give up rather quickly on prayer because we’re just not going to get it

I don’t know anyone that gets a 100% “yes” response rate from God

and of course most of us realize at one level that’s a good thing and yet some of the “no’s” we get are really, really hard to hear

My miserable sophomore year of high school is NOTHING compared to what many of you have prayed for and asked God to do

When you’ve not gotten the change in circumstances or situation that you were desperately hoping for.

But if our first priority in prayer is NOT circumstantial change but internal transformation as we approach Jesus, know him intimately and honestly, learn from him,

and in the context of that teaching, loving, honest, authentic relationship we take Jesus up on this invitation to exchange our burdens for his yoke

THEN what we realize is that every single moment we’re not in some sort of prayer-connection with Jesus is like this:

Say you discover one day with a little digging that there’s gold all over your back yard—your backyard is filled with gold everywhere, and it’s just a foot or two beneath the surface

But because life is so busy with all these bills you’ve got to pay you can’t be bothered to get out a shovel and spend ten minutes digging for that gold that would pay those bills you’re so stressed out about

The first and primary function of prayer is personal and relational, not circumstantial and outcomes-oriented.

All that is true and right and good AND at the same time you know what? Here’s our 2<sup>nd</sup> answer to WHY PRAY and we’re going the complete opposite direction: **PRAYER CHANGES THINGS**

I’ve told you before how my first two years of working with college students was an utter failure, whole thing just about fell apart from 50 students down to 15

March of my second year I went on a spring break mission trip with some other folks I knew

We went to London and worked with a group of missionaries there and all week long they just had us praying and praying and praying

And we did lots of other things: spiritual interest surveys and building relationships with people in the church and community

But they told us that since we were only there for one week our primary job was to till the soil with prayer

And I came back after a week of praying like I'd never prayed before, and decided nothing else was working anyway, so I decided to start doing prayer walks, just like I'd done in London that week

And every single week for an hour to an hour and a half, I would walk around this campus and just pray and pray and pray

And two things happened: first, just like C.S. Lewis said, prayer changed me. I began to see the campus differently and through God's eyes, and I began to really love it like he did

But secondly, you know what happened? The little dying chapter of 15 students turned into a chapter of 55 students, then 90 students, then 140 students

And I didn't have any explanation, there was nothing especially we did differently, the Lord was just simply giving me a YES to my prayers to move on the campus and do a new thing.

Prayer changes things.

Or more specifically and accurately: God has created a universe where prayer to him is a means of affecting and changing spiritual and earthly realities.

The missionaries in London did a devotional on prayer one day and he used some scripture from Revelation that has been one of the most formative passages for me to understand prayer ever since.

If you're not familiar with the Bible, Revelation is the very last book of the Bible and it's one of the most famously difficult to understand

the writer John is giving some sort of vision about the future and what's going to happen

But so much of it is written in code and symbolism in part because John was in jail and any letter he was going to send out was going to be read by the authorities

So John is writing this letter full of all kinds of promises and prophecies about the future

and it's hard to tell when he's talking about Rome and the political and spiritual realities of HIS day

Versus what are the things that are going to happen some day in the more distant future from when John is writing this that is really the end of this world as we know it

And in the midst of all this symbolism and veiled references to animals and numbers like 666, John is describing how Jesus is going to come back and re-claim what is his

And he gives us an image that is so important that he doesn't leave the interpretation to chance—what he's writing in this one part is so mission-critical, he wants to make sure that everyone understands exactly what this particular image means

And it's subtle but so important that it comes up twice in Revelation, and we pick up in Revelation 5 where there's this cosmic huge, vast scene of heaven, a throne room in heaven

And there are elders and creatures and angels all worshipping together and there's this scroll and there's only one who is worthy to open the scroll and that's Jesus

And opening that scroll is going to unleash the end of all things and ultimately the great victory of God over all sin, death, and evil.

So here comes Jesus to take up this scroll and to open it up and begin this great battle to reclaim all that is ultimately his, and that's where we pick this up:

***<sup>8</sup>And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. –Rev. 5***

Okay, so here we have THE KICK-OFF EVENT to the end of all time!

And the Lamb, which is Jesus, is the centerpiece, and all these angels and living creatures and elders are gathered around him

But what they're holding are these golden bowls full of incense and what do those bowls have? The prayers of God's people.

And then, couple of chapters later, these bowls and these prayers come back to play a huge role in the victory of Jesus over all sin and death, check this out in

*... another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne,<sup>4</sup> and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.<sup>5</sup> Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. –Revelation 8*

So in this scene, the prayers are being co-mingled with the smoke from this censer, all offered to God on this golden altar

It's all being offered to God by this angel at this altar

and then the fire from that same altar where the prayers were being offered is poured back out onto the earth as a means of God's final judgment and ultimately God's final and ultimate redemption

There's a whole lot that I don't know or understand about what all is happening here and how it all works out

But here's what I do see and understand: the prayers of God's people are an essential part of the final redemption of all things

And if our prayers are somehow being captured in heaven

in order to at some point in the future be poured BACK out onto this earth as a part of the energy of God's final redemption of all things

Then what that means is that ultimately God will use EVERY prayer to change EVERY THING—ultimately God will use EVERY prayer to change EVERYTHING

And what that means is OUR JOB in prayer is to simply fill the bowl.

Our work in prayer is to fill and fill and fill the bowl.

Whenever you pray, whenever I pray, that prayer is being added to the bowl of prayers up in heaven

that will one day be poured back out onto the earth and will one day play an essential role in the victory of God over all things

And if that's true, if every single prayer is being gathered up in the prayer bowls in heaven, then you know what kinds of prayers are in those prayer bowls?

Prayers that we would call "unanswered prayers"

If every prayer is gathered up in heaven then even the ones that we got a "NO" to, even the ones that we're heart-broken over or mad over or ticked off at God about

Every single prayer to Jesus, even the ones that are selfish or misguided and even the ones that represent some of our deepest heartbreaks and darkest days of our lives

Every single one of those prayers is filling those bowls and those bowls  
then will one day be poured out onto this earth as a part of the final and total  
and utter redemption and victory of God over every thing evil

And will finally one day make everything new, everything right, no more  
tears or mourning or crying or pain or brokenness—every single thing will be made  
new and right and good and whole

And every single one of the prayers of God's people is a part of that perfect  
ending happening.

And do you know what that means? That means there are no un-answered prayers.  
There. Are. No. Unanswered. Prayers.

Everything that we've ever wanted or longed for will one day be fulfilled and finally  
taken care of by Jesus—there are no unanswered prayers.

There are no wasted prayers.

And ultimately every single request ever made to God receives its final and total and  
full YES in the victory of Jesus over sin and death and the renewing and restoring of  
all things.

Jesus hears all our prayers and *sometimes* moves in extraordinary ways to grant  
them here in this life and SOMETIMES he doesn't

the Bible is full of people who get prayers answered and it's full of people  
who don't get the answers that they want

Including Jesus, who gets a big fat "no" from the Father when he asks perhaps the  
most pleading request of all of history—can you take this cup of suffering away from  
me?

That same Jesus who got a "NO" from his Father sometimes gives us a "no" as well

But he will one day move definitively to answer all our deepest longings and meet  
all our deepest desires when he comes and makes all things new

And as he does so, he pours out the power of the prayers of his people onto this  
earth as a part of his mighty reclaiming and redeeming project.

Prayer changes things. It just does.

And for some of you, you can't help but ask, "But how does it work?"

How does it work with God's plan and me praying and doesn't God already  
know what's going to happen and all kinds of great questions

And I have some guesses but at the end of the day I just have to say: I have no definitive answer. Nobody really does. I have no idea how it all fits together or how it all works

All I know is that throughout the Scriptures, from the start all the way to the very finish that we just read  
people pray to God and God moves and acts and engages and changes things based on the prayers people have prayed

God has designed a universe where every action has an equal and opposite reaction

And God has designed a universe where the spiritual laws and dynamics include critical space for your prayers and my prayers, our spiritual activity  
to create some sort of reaction in the cosmos, where your request gets heard, considered, and then acted upon by the God of the universe

All our prayers will one day be given their final YES in Jesus, and sometimes our prayers are given a very earthy, in-this-life yes as well.

And the questions about how it all works are great, but if the questions are keeping you from praying practical, specific, concrete prayers to ask God to change things around you

And if you're spending more time stuck on how it works than you're spending actually praying and watching it work

Then you need to put the questions on pause for a bit, suspend analysis, and just pray  
my guess is between your car, your computer, your cell phone, or your husband or wife or your kids, there's something that you're very attached to in your life that you have no idea how it works!

Because in the mystery and mercy of God, prayer changes things

Over the next several weeks, we're going to dig into a simple framework that will hopefully help many of us to grow in prayer together

And there's lots of reasons why we're doing this and why we're called to pray, but to start with this morning I want to try to give you these couple to help us enter into a more prayer-filled life

First, prayer changes us as we meet with Jesus, as we approach and know and exchange and learn from him

And second, prayer changes things—in the mystery of grace and the mystery of God's activity and how he designed and wired up the universe

He's left room for us to participate in his work.

We participate in God's work every time we serve someone who needs help or listen to someone who's in hard spot or buy a Christmas present for a kid who would otherwise go without.

We participate in God's work in the universe every time we visit a sick relative or friend in the hospital.

And we participate and affect real things in this universe every time we pray as we fill the bowl full of the prayers of God's people

This week, I want to invite you to take a step into a prayer-filled life.

First because every moment of every day, Jesus is offering to swap out your burdens for his, he's inviting you into this relational dynamic where we give and receive from him, where he becomes our teacher and we grow into becoming his children

And second, because God designed a universe where our prayers make a difference in circumstances and outcomes

To help you with this, I'm going to invite you into a little something I've done off and on over the years to help me to remember to take Jesus up on his offer to be with me and to carry my burdens or just be present in a situation

Underneath your seat is a rubber band, I'm going to invite you for the next several days to wear this around your wrist.

And every time you remember that it's there and you feel it, it's like a little call to engage with the Lord, to remember that he's with you

And that this exchange is on offer to you right in that moment: your burdens for his yoke

We started our service this morning inviting you to write down whatever it is you're carrying into today and to let someone else carry it for you to the Lord

We're going to close with basically the same invitation. As we move into our last two songs, we're going to have prayer ministers in the back who will be glad to pray for you

All they'll do is listen to your request and pray for you and over you—we're going to offer that each week at the end of the service, I want to invite you to step into that whenever you need it

Journaling freshmen year of college: “Going to attempt the most futile endeavor known to man: going to try to keep a journal.”

One morning: instead of signing off “Amen” I decided whole day a day of prayer—totally guy thing of waffling off God/segmenting life—but made that whole day a rich experience, totally bringing God with me into my day in a different way; tried it the next day and didn’t have the same rich experience so I moved on

Future Grace/Jesus is the goal of all life, all beauty and goodness and joy are located in him—introduced to “Practicing the Presence” by Brother Lawrence and “Game with Minutes”

Decided to try to practice presence of Jesus as much of my day as I possibly could—wore a watch, switched wrists to remember to think about, check-in, listen, pray, often just say “Jesus you’re here and that changes everything”

Talk at windy gap and Rob wootton: “this watch is condemning me.”

~~VCU/London prayer story/prayer walking~~

Listening prayer and centering prayer

Mario Bergner: listening prayer and me freaking out a bit about it/unsettled by it