

Daily Discipleship

Seventh Sunday of Easter (B) – John 17:6-19

The Path of Discipleship: *Rooted in Prayer*

Focus Question: *How does being rooted in prayer help you walk the path of discipleship?*

word of life

Read John 17: 6-19

[Jesus prayed:] ⁶“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.” (NRSV)

Before Jesus faces his arrest, trial and crucifixion, Jesus prays an extensive prayer on behalf of his disciples. If you have not read this prayer by Jesus recently, take time to read all of John 17. It provides a glimpse into the heart of Jesus and his priorities.

1. *What does it say about Jesus for him to spend time in prayer at this point in his life?*

The section of the prayer found in John 17:6-8 appears to be a continuation of a conversation between Jesus and God. Jesus has fulfilled his purpose. He has made known God’s name and words to the individuals whom God provided to him. Certain ones have heard and believe that Jesus has been sent by God.

2. *Would you have expected more people who witnessed the teachings and ministry of Jesus to have come to faith? Why or why not?*

The focus of Jesus’ prayer shifts to include his followers. He knows the struggles of this world and the difficulty of keeping on the path of discipleship, so he prays on their behalf. He doesn’t include the whole world but focuses on those who have connected with him. Jesus is about to die, but he pauses for prayer on behalf of others. Isn’t that so like Jesus?

3. *Why do you think it was important for Jesus to hold his disciples in prayer?*
4. *How does it feel to have Jesus pray for you?*

The prayer becomes a petition for protection for the followers of Jesus. Jesus is not as concerned about protecting his disciples against the powers of the world, but he desires to protect them from divisions among themselves. This is a prayer for Christian unity. Jesus experiences complete joy when all of his followers are united as one.

5. *What makes it so difficult for Christians to get along with each other?*

word among us

Jacob knelt beside his bed and began his prayers, “Now I lay me down to sleep. . .” His mother watched from her rocking chair as she began her own prayers for her beloved son. Her prayer was a mother’s prayer as she prayed for God’s protection for him. Slowly, her head began to shake back and forth as she pondered all the ways her son might be harmed. These were tough times to try to follow Jesus. She continued to pray long after Jacob had drifted off to sleep.

1. *Who in your life needs a prayer for protection?*

Think about your own prayer life.

2. *How often do we simply stop activities to pause for prayer?*
3. *What restricts us from praying on behalf of others?*

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how pray, he taught them the Lord’s Prayer. (Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 11:2-4) The words of the Lord’s Prayer reflect the priorities the disciples of every age are to have. The prayer in John 17 is an extensive prayer spoken by someone preparing for his own journey to death. It reflects his priorities.

4. *What can you learn about Jesus through his prayer?*
5. *How does his prayer compare and contrast to your prayers?*

Jesus prays for the unity among his disciples to be like the unity between Jesus and God. That’s a powerful image. Take a moment to imagine what Christians might do if we were linked as closely as Jesus and God. Of course our link would need to include the Holy Spirit, the one who empowers.

As Christians, it is important to reflect on divisions among believers. In the over 2000 years since Jesus lived on earth, there have been times of significant conflict and splits. Even within congregations, there can be strife and divisions.

6. *Have we totally failed at this prayer petition to be one?*
7. *What tends to divide Christians from other Christians?*
8. *What might we do to live the prayer for unity spoken by Jesus?*

The disciples are sent out into the world to be witnesses. Jesus is well aware that his disciples (including us) will be hated by the world. Some may die a martyr’s death. Others will be rejected and persecuted. Thus, Jesus prays earnestly for his followers.

We can learn much from this prayer in our own prayer life. Take time to note how much of the prayer has to do with Jesus and his own challenges.

9. *How much time does Jesus spend in praying for others?*
10. *What can we learn from this prayer of Jesus?*

Prayer

Mighty God, continue to protect us as we walk the path of discipleship. Unite us with others of your disciples. Amen

Dig Deeper

Mark 14:32-42



Daily Discipleship

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

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last word

This week, take the opportunity to publicly pray for unity among Christians.