

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

 149 Main Street
Madison Heights, VA 24572

MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 13

August 16, 2022

George B. Harris, Minister
Email: bernerdharris@yahoo.com
mhcc16@yahoo.com
Church Telephone: (434) 845-3855
Minister's Telephone: (434) 215-4846

Pam Hubbard
Music Director

Brenda Harris
Administrative Assistant

The Prayer Life of Jesus

Prayer can be done in public, in private, and in secret. I think that when it comes to prayer, the main thing is that you do it. However, if we are sincere in our communication with God, the best example to follow is the prayer life of Jesus. Public prayer has a rightful place and purpose in our Sunday morning worship services as well as other times and places in our lives. One thing that we learn from Jesus is the necessity of sincerity in our prayers. Jesus denounced public hypocritical prayers because they were done for show. So, Jesus suggested that people go to their room, close the door, and pray in secret. This does not mean that the only way we can pray is in secret. What Jesus was teaching is to eliminate the hypocrisy of praying which was done to demonstrate piety in order to glorify the individual.

The best example of for us to follow in our daily prayer lives is the prayer life of Jesus. One such example occurred when Jesus spent forty days and nights in the wilderness fasting and praying. It is often thought that prayer is what gave him the strength to resist temptation. Before he recruited his 12 disciples, Jesus spent all night in prayer. He continued a life of prayer, often at times going to secluded areas in order to find a solitary place to pray. There was one time when the disciples had a hard time finding him because he went away to pray. Apparently he had been praying for some time because when they found him they said "Everyone is looking for you!" Then Jesus talks about going to the next towns. This shows us that his life of preaching and healing is directly connected to his prayer life. Since we confess to be Christians, we are to follow the example of Christ in our daily lives.

When I was considering going into pastoral ministry, I spent time observing the prayers of different preachers. I noticed that the preachers of some denominations had similar prayers to other preachers of that denomination. From this I learned, or at least assumed, that for many of us how we pray is learned from within our environment. I imagined that with a little study I could probably predict which denomination they were affiliated with by the way that they prayed. I noticed that some preachers had long and slow prayers that were loaded with theological language and I wondered if I could ever pray like that. As I was contemplating my abilities to pray in public I noticed a different style of prayer. One day a young college student that was serving as a youth leader had a public prayer during a youth group meeting. Her prayer went something like this "Oh God, we just love you so much ..." I don't remember the rest of her prayer but of all the prayers that I had studied, that was the one that impressed me the most. I came from the heart. I said to myself "That's the way I'm going to do it." It is pure and I think that is much more significant in the eyes of God than any formalities, theology, or doctrine.

The prayer life of Jesus did not degenerate into a daily routine; it served a vital importance in his daily life. For example, after feeding five thousand people, some of the people wanted to seize Jesus and make him king. He dismissed the crowd, sent his disciples away, and withdrew to the mountain to pray. He prayed for his disciples, for others, for himself, and he prayed for God's will to be done. Jesus also taught his disciples to pray by saying "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

George