

Week 4

The Joy of Praying for Others

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy." Philippians 1:3-4 (NIV)

As I grow older the list of those I want to pray for grows longer and longer. Sometimes after finishing my prayer I wonder if I missed someone for whom I should pray. Should I print a list and keep it by my bedside? Could God just read the names of those I forgot to mention? Does God read English? Now you're just being silly. God already knows what is on my heart. My prayers are not for God. They are to help me realize that I am not in control. My prayers help me get my priorities straight.

I am so blessed by the people that God has brought into my life. I am blessed by the contributions those people make to my life. My prayers are for their wellbeing. As the Apostle Paul said, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy," It is easy to pray with joy when I think of the goodness of God in my life and the people he has brought to share my journey.

Prayer:

Dear loving God, fill my heart with joy for the miracle of friendship and kinship that is possible because of the love of Christ Jesus. Amen.

Why Have a Say Something Nice Sunday?

The simple answer is that words are powerful. Words have the power to build or destroy. Words have the power to heal or wound. With our words, we have the power to build up a Christian community or destroy it.

This special day is an opportunity to build the community of faith, strengthen relationships and heal old wounds. Our national discourse has become so strident and even in religious circles, the rhetoric is often far from Christ-like. In Philippians 1:27 (ESV) we read, "Live as citizens who reflect the Good News of Christ."

This is a day to say thank you to those who make our lives better just by being a part of them. This is a day to recognize those who contribute to our lives in specific ways. This is a day to apologize for words spoken in frustration, anger, or disappointment.

One day is one day, but perhaps we can stretch it to two days, and then just maybe if we encourage one another and ask for God's help, we might change the world!

June Is Effective Communications Month

In coordination with Say Something Nice Sunday, First Baptist member Mitch Carnell has written devotions for each week during the month of June. Although Effective Communications Month is a secular observation, these devotions will help apply a Christian worldview to ways we can communicate with Christ-like character.

What can we do today?

When you leave today, please take a daisy to give to someone who could use an encouraging word. Ask God to bring a person(s) to your focus each week to check on or meet for lunch. They will appreciate your care and kindness!



Say Something NICE SUNDAY JUNE 5, 2022

**"Live as citizens
who reflect the
Good News of Christ."
Philippians 1:27 (ESV)**



Week 1

"Grace Upon Grace"

Out of his fullness, we have received grace upon grace." John 1:16 (NRSV)

Today I took the ornaments off my Christmas tree and wrapped each one carefully for storage. Some brought precious memories from when my children were young. Others are souvenirs from wonderful trips my wife and I enjoyed. None have any great monetary value, but all are reminders of a life filled with blessings and brimming over with love. In the words of scripture, they are reminders of "Grace upon grace."

At the wedding at Cana, Jesus' first miracle was not simply to provide wine for a wedding feast and save his host from embarrassment, but to make the very best wine to demonstrate the generosity of God. Our God is a generous God. Our God is no miser. God does not withhold our blessings. God's generosity at Cana is a foretelling of his generous gifts in our lives. We continually are recipients of God's grace upon grace.

Prayer:

Dear God, help me to be grateful for the gifts that I have received so that I may be generous with others. Amen



Week 2

"Gifts Are Meant to Be Shared"

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Corinthians 12:7 (NRSV)

I am amazed by the gifts displayed by those around me. All of these gifts make our lives better when they are employed for the common good. These gifts are not ours alone. They belong to all of us. When they are used cooperatively, all of us benefit. When a scientist discovers a new cure or an engineer discovers a hidden flaw in a new bridge design, we all benefit. When good Samaritans come together to open and operate a shelter for the homeless or when a civic club develops a new playground the entire community benefits.

There are several listings of gifts of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. All of these gifts are necessary in building community. Nothing in the world exists outside the power of God, but our ideas, our imagination, and our labor are necessary to bring an idea to fruition. We are co-creators with God. When we pool our resources including our various gifts mighty works that serve humanity and honor God can be accomplished.

Prayer:

Creator God, teach us to share our gifts as well as our resources and to work together for the good of our larger community. Amen.

Week 3

"The Nearness of God"

"Where can I go from your spirit?" Psalm 139:7 (NRSV)

While talking about this scripture passage Rev. Dr. Cynthia Campbell, former president of McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, said, "There is no place you can go that God is not already there." What a reassuring thought. In earlier Biblical times, God was considered to be resident in a particular location. If you were out of that location, you had no access to God. That is why the Israelites carried the Ark of the Covenant with them. Now we know that God is everywhere from the remotest hamlet to the largest thriving city.

I enjoy listening to the stories of soldiers, sailors, chaplains, and missionaries who have returned from the battlefields and mission posts around the world as they talk about their experiences with God in their far-flung outposts. Their testimonies remind me that God is reachable wherever we might find ourselves. We can talk to God and listen to God regardless of our location or circumstances. We are blessed beyond measure to be connected to our God.

Prayer:

Dear reachable God, thank you for being with us at all times no matter where we find ourselves. Amen.

