

Prayer Is the Simplest Form of Speech

The importance of speech – of making our voices heard, is much on our minds these days. That our speech is important and can change things for ourselves and for others, is a critical part of our secular and faith practices. Our speech can do great good, but also great harm.

We need to guard our speech and use our words carefully. Especially when we are hurt, angry, afraid, feel threatened, or have a particularly strong opinion about something, our choice of words and how we use them can quickly make a situation better or worse for everyone and change the options available for moving forward when there are decisions to be made. In this age of social media and other electronic communication, it is easy to effect large numbers of people with our speech very quickly, and impossible to take our words back once we hit send or post them. Words can take on a life of their own and subsequent attempts to correct a mistake, make amends for an angry outburst, or overcome mis-information are all but impossible. Being careful what we say and what we listen to are critical as are decisions about which of the communications we receive should be shared. Making a good faith effort to check the information we receive before accepting or sharing it is a critical skill. Taking the time to cool off and think things through before responding when emotions are running high can prevent misunderstanding and great harm. It is equally important not to just keep silent, hide our meaning, or ignore the facts just so we do not offend or disturb others when there are critical issues that must be dealt with. Sometimes a bitter pill must be taken for health to be restored.

The simplest and perhaps the most powerful form of speech that is open to us is still prayer. It keeps us in touch with our creator and savior who supports and upholds us. Once we have learned to pray, prayer can be a life-long habit that can sustain us, remind us we are never alone, and help change the world. With prayer we can go anywhere and make a difference – from the sick room to a hurricane's path; from a war zone to a refugee camp; from a homeless child's corner to a government office. When we start with prayer, all our other speech can be shaped to reflect the will of God for our neighbor's good. Prayer can help us not to focus on debate for debate's sake, or on winning or losing, but on being faithful. See James 3:1-14

This week, pray for:

- the worsening **COVID-19 pandemic**. Help all of us do everything we can to keep each other as safe as we can. Pray for those who are working on a vaccine and on treatments for the virus. Remember those who are caring for the sick and the dying.
- **Nigeria** Last Sunday there was a Boko Haram attack on the village of Takulashe (near Chibok). The village was burned and among those killed were 9 Brethren. Sunday worship services had been held early and people had fled to the bush so the number killed was lower than it might have been. There are some people still missing. Fear that there will be more attacks continues.
- **those dealing with storms, fires, flooding, earthquakes, & other disasters** People in Turkey and Greece who are dealing with the aftermath of an earth quake in the Aegean Sea October 30th. The people of Nicaragua and Honduras who are dealing with the devastation from hurricane Eta. Reports from Honduras say the damage there was devastating. Many homes were lost; farmers have lost their crops; there is flooding; water systems and other infrastructure have been lost; food and other necessities are in short supply. Efforts to help people with COVID-19 have already stretched resources so there is little left to meet this new need.



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