

J.J.

GOING NEAR TO GOD

James 5: 13-18

DISCUSSION :

What is prayer?

When should we pray?

James 5: 13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Etymology : pray “Proseuchomai” To go near and ask

James 4:8 Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Time when we should go near to God

I. WHEN PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING, PRAY

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray

DISCUSSION : What are the different kinds of suffering?

Examples : sickness, bereavement, disappointment, persecutions, loss of health or property

DISCUSSION :

Do you know someone who is close to you who is undergoing some kind of suffering?

The church is God’s family. Do you think we need to pray for the church (locally and corporately)?

What are the kinds of suffering other brothers and sisters (not only in Ontario but all over the world) suffer?

What should we pray for?

1. For the REMOVAL of the suffering, if it be the Lord's will

- cf. Paul in 2Co 12:8

2. For the STRENGTH to endure the suffering, if it be the Lord's will that we bear with it - cf. 1Co 10:13

II. WHEN PEOPLE HAVE GOOD SPIRITS, PRAISE

Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.

Etymology : euthymos “happy, merry” good, eu, thymos “passion, boiling up inside; negative, anger”

DISCUSSION :

What are the times when people are merry?

Do you think people have a tendency not to go near to God when everything is doing well? Why?

III. WHEN PEOPLE ARE SICK, PRAY

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Why call the elders? What is the role of an elder of the church? They lead (presbuteros).

Elders of the church are expected to be righteous people.

Read Titus 1:5-9

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Explain *anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.*

It means that elders need to make sure that they seek proper medical attention.

In a century where hospitals were non-existent, and physicians were rare, anointing with oil was a common treatment - cf. Lk 10:34

Story : There was this pastor who was sick and the doctor said that he needed to drink medicine and get some full bed rest. But this pastor was the kind who just couldn't lie down. So an elder of the church visited him and saw that he was still out and about working when the doctor specifically told him to get bed rest. The elder asked the pastor, "Didn't the doctor say that you get a full bed rest?" The pastor said, "Yes". Then the elder asked again "Do you want the church to pray for you?" The pastor said, "Of course." The elder then said, "Then go to bed and follow the doctor's advise so the church can pray for you."

Here's the problem when you don't get proper medical attention and you ask people to pray for you.

You are testing God. *Deuteronomy 6:16* What is the second temptation of Jesus Christ? *Matthew 4:5-7*

For example : You have heart condition and people are praying for you that you will get healed but you are still smoking or eating chicharon every day.

There's a saying, "Trust in God but lock your door."

Or I ask God to protect my house for thieves not to enter and yet I leave my keys on the door.

15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well

Proper medical attention and prayer is not a contradiction. In fact, it is God's will for you to get proper medical attention and pray at the same time.

IV. WHEN PEOPLE ARE IN SIN, PRAY

the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

Some people are sick because of a sinful lifestyle (1 Cor 11:29-32)

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

In short, when people are in a sinful lifestyle, make sure first that they get right with God by repenting. (confess,...means to agree with the church that what they are doing is sinful)

Discussion : Is sin the cause of all sickness? Yes and No.

Yes. When Adam and Eve fell, sin came into the world and corrupted this earth and that's when disease and death came in.

BUT, No, it doesn't necessarily mean that when someone is sick, they are in a sinful lifestyle.

Why? CONTEXT :

IF *they have sinned, they will be forgiven*

Sometimes, God allows sickness in our lives to show that He is more than enough in our lives and not necessarily because we are in sin.

2 Corinthians 12: 7-9

And this is the time we can thank God for the sickness.

2 Corinthians 12: 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

S.G.D.