



Pastor Hanke's Blog

October 21, 2018

Includers: Pray 1

Bible Reference: Acts 10:1-33

This may seem like the most obvious of the Includers series, but it is also one of the most important entry points into the unchurched culture. I remember people saying to me in college, "I am asking you to pray because I know you will actually do it." This was a compliment, a challenge, and a slam all at once. It was a compliment because they saw something in me that led them to trust me and share their prayer requests. It was a challenge because I felt pressured to make sure I prayed for them. And finally, it was a slam on Christians who flippantly say, "I'll pray for you" like they would tell someone to have a nice day; with no real thought behind it. It becomes just something you say.

Let's break these down. First, as a disciple of Christ I want to be someone who people know they can ask to pray for them. This means making people in your life aware that you are a praying person. This can happen by regularly asking them how you can pray for them, or more casually by noticing something specific in their lives and telling them you will pray for that. I usually practice the latter; I find it more genuine.

Second, the challenge of praying for someone often has to do with our own expectations of prayer. Does it mean you have to have a prayer box, write down the names and prayer requests of those you're praying for, and pray at a specific time every day? If that works for you, that is one way you could do it. Or, could it mean that whenever you think of the person, stop and pray for them? That is another way you could do, if that fits you better. In my case, I have regular times of the day when I read God's Word, but most of my prayer time is spontaneous. I believe this is the Holy Spirit active in my life. He brings people to mind at the most random times, and I'll pray for them. I can pray in almost any situation, no matter what I am doing.

Finally, it is a slam on Christians who say they'll pray for someone but don't do it. Thankfully, there is grace for us when that happens. I try to combat this by intentionally following up with the person who requested the prayer. This may mean I send them a quick text when they come to mind, or I ask them about their situation when I see them next. Sometimes I can go months without seeing someone, but I still try to remember to follow up.

This week our Bible reading shows us Pray 1 in real time. We watch as prayer brings people to mind for Peter and Cornelius, and then moves them to action. Prayer is a powerful part of being a disciple of Christ. When we include others in our prayers, its power is amazing! This weekend we will dive into one of the most powerful tools the Lord has given us, and ask that He help us grow in including others into it.

God's Peace,

Pastor Will