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“Emoji’s of the Faith—Prayer Hands”



Romans 8:26, Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2

May 14, 2017 Mother’s Day

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Things My Mother Taught Me

1. My mother taught me TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE.

"If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."

2. My mother taught me RELIGION.

"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."

3. My mother taught me about TIME TRAVEL.

"If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"

4. My mother taught me LOGIC.

"Because I said so, that's why."

5. My mother taught me MORE LOGIC.

"If you fall out of that swing and break your leg, don't come running to me."

6. My mother taught me FORESIGHT.

"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."

7. My mother taught me IRONY.

"Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about."

8. My mother taught me about the science of OSMOSIS.

"Shut your mouth and eat your supper."

9. My mother taught me about CONTORTIONISM.

"Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"

10. My mother taught me about STAMINA.

"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."

Ah, the wonderful teachings of mothers. We can laugh, but I want to recognize that Mother’s Day is often a very hard day for many women for a variety of reasons. I want to specifically address that at the end of the message. Today I want to focus on the last Emoji of Faith in our series. Prayer hands were chosen, because I know that I would not be where I would be without the prayers of my mom. I also know that moms probably pray more than any other people.

The scriptures that were read by these generations remind us that each generation...needs to be people of prayer. Now know that we have several opportunities to be in prayer for each other through our congregational ministries. We have a prayer service every Wednesday morning in the chapel at 7:30. We have a Men's Prayer Group that meets on Thursday at 7 p.m. We have a Prayer Chain, we have prayer cards in the pews in front of you. We want to be, we need to be a church of prayer. We have prayer at each meeting and task force we have. But the emphasis today is that we individually need to be people of prayer.

By prayer, I am not talking about public prayer in front of people. I am talking about the personal private prayer that each of us should be doing. You may be hesitant to say a pray. Prayer at its very basic is conversation with God. So don't be afraid to pray. How amazing to pray to the creator of the universe, to pray to the one who created you, to pray to the one who cares more about you than you do. Who cares more about your family than you do. This is the One who wants to hear from you. This is the one who desires to know your heart.

Now you may say, but I thought God knows our heart and knows our thoughts. He does. But he wants to hear from you. I know that Sarah loves me. But I still like to hear her tell me so. God desires that communication with you. Oh He knows, but in relationship with Him He wants to be in partnership with you and have that communication with you.

There have been times where I have been so overwhelmed that I did not know exactly what to pray for and even how to pray. Let's look at the first scripture that was read.

Romans 8:26 English Standard Version (ESV) ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

The Spirit helps us. By the way next week we begin a new sermon series on The Holy Spirit called, "The Source." It will be a 4 weeks series exploring the Person, Presence, Power and Purpose of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit helps us when we pray. We do not know what to pray...but the Spirit helps and intercedes for us.

We are hurt so deep that in our prayer we can't put it into words.

We have such great joy that in our prayer we can't put into words.

We have such grief that in our prayer we can't put it into words.

We have such concern for our loved ones that we can't put it into words.

A grandfather was walking through his yard when he heard his granddaughter repeating the alphabet in a tone of voice that sounded like a prayer. He asked her what she was doing. The little girl explained: “I’m praying, but I can’t think of exactly the right words, so I’m just saying all the letters, and God will put them together for me, because He knows what I’m thinking.”

Amen!!!! Here is the great part the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words.

Interesting learning in my sermon prep time of something I had not noticed about this passage in Romans 8. Check this out.

Romans 8:22 English Standard Version (ESV)

²² For we know that the whole CREATION has been GROANING...

Romans 8:23 English Standard Version (ESV)

²³ And not only the creation, but WE ourselves... GROAN inwardly...

Romans 8:26 English Standard Version (ESV)

²⁶ Likewise the SPIRIT... himself intercedes for us with GROANINGS too deep for words.

Creation groans, we groan and now we see where the Holy Spirit groans. Groans happens when there are no words. At the end of January when I was in the hospital I groaned loudly. Now I hated to be a pain, but I guess I was groaning because I was in pain. My groans were interpreted and the medical staff interceded on my behalf.

Oh to think that when we are so overwhelmed with our prayer concerns, when we are so overwhelmed with our joys...we can go to the Lord and He knows us, knows our heart, knows our needs and our joys and intercedes for us. The Holy Spirit just doesn’t intercede with words, but He utters groaning too deep for words. Wow...that is how much we are loved.

The second passage that was read: **Romans 12:12 English Standard Version (ESV) ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.**

In our prayers we can rejoice in hope. Not hope in the circumstances, in fact the circumstances may be very concerning, but we can hope in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Rejoice in Him. He is our ultimate hope. Be patient in tribulation. Which mother here has not had her share of tribulation with children and family life. Be patient. Don’t quit in the hard times. Pray all the harder.

With the hope or joy, with the tribulation, trouble, or suffering---be in prayer. Mothers rejoice when children get accomplishments and rewards. Give thanks to God. Mothers suffer when their children suffer...be in prayer. Be constant in prayer. Not just in hard times, but in all times.

And then the last passage of scripture that was read: **Colossians 4:2 English Standard Version (ESV) ² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.**

Jesus told His disciples to watch and pray.

Oh to be devoted in prayer. Continue faithfully in prayer.

A Christian Monk, Abbot in the 6th century had a very interesting quote. He is Abba Doretheos of Gaza. (image) **“A man who prays without ceasing, if he achieves something, knows why he achieved it, and can take no pride in it; for he cannot attribute it to his own powers, but attributes all his achievements to God, always renders thanks to him and constantly calls upon him, trembling lest he be deprived of help.”**

So three verses of scripture boils down to one main point....pray. The Bible gives several examples of different postures when people pray.

Abraham fell on his face before God. (Genesis 17:3,17)

Moses prayed with his hands outstretched. (Exodus 9:27-29)

King Solomon knelt. (1 Kings 8:54)

Jesus looked up to heaven when he prayed. (Mark 6:41)

King David bowed before the Lord (Psalm 5:7)

The people of Israel sat before the Lord (Judges 20:26)

Elijah had his head between his knees when he prayed/ (1 Kings 8:42)

Many prayed by lifting up holy hands. (Psalms 134, 141, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, 8)

Jehoshaphat stood before the Lord when he prayed (2 Chronicles 20:5)

The important thing is that we be people of pray. The position, posture, time, place is secondary. What matters is that we pray, pray, pray.

In sermon planning I have a “Know, Feel, Do” for each sermon I preach. What I want the congregation to Know. What I want them to feel and what I feel God is calling us to Do. The “Know” for this sermon was to know that we need to be people of prayer. The Feel was to feel the need for the Spirit to intercede when I pray; I want to be constant and steadfast in prayer. The Do was a prayer time in particular for mothers and with mothers.

So I thought we would bring the kneelers down for the opportunity to pray, but then we realized that the last song we are getting ready to sing is “The Stand”...so that seemed a little opposite.

But just as Jehoshaphat stood I figured we could stand, lift up our eyes towards heaven if we wanted, and even raise holy hands if we wanted. But also I want you to realize on this Mother’s Day that it is difficult for many...memoires, what could have been, and all the feeling evoked on a Mother’s Day. We as a community of faith of All Ages All In, Loving God, and Loving All want to know that each woman here is loved. And we want to stand with you.

Amy Young writes a blog called, The messy Middle Where Grace and Truth reside. A few years ago now she wrote this blog: An open letter to pastors (A non-mom speaks about Mother’s Day).

She talks in that blog of the difficulty that mothers and women have with being in church on Mother’s Day. The emotions, the hopes, the dreams, the realities.

And so I would like the entire congregation to stand. As we take a stand with our women of faith today. Amy Young writes this:

To those who gave birth this year to their first child—we celebrate with you

To those who lost a child this year – we mourn with you

To those who are in the trenches with little ones every day and wear the badge of food stains – we appreciate you

To those who experienced loss through miscarriage, failed adoptions, or running away—we mourn with you

To those who walk the hard path of infertility, fraught with pokes, prods, tears, and disappointment – we walk with you. Forgive us when we say foolish things. We don’t mean to make this harder than it is.

To those who are foster moms, mentor moms, and spiritual moms – we need you

To those who have warm and close relationships with your children – we celebrate with you

To those who have disappointment, heart ache, and distance with your children – we sit with you

To those who lost their mothers this year – we grieve with you

To those who experienced abuse at the hands of your own mother – we acknowledge your experience

To those who lived through driving tests, medical tests, and the overall testing of motherhood – we are better for having you in our midst

To those who are single and long to be married and mothering your own children – we mourn that life has not turned out the way you longed for it to be

To those who step-parent – we walk with you on these complex paths

To those who envisioned lavishing love on grandchildren -yet that dream is not to be, we grieve with you

To those who will have emptier nests in the upcoming year – we grieve and rejoice with you

To those who placed children up for adoption — we commend you for your selflessness and remember how you hold that child in your heart

And to those who are pregnant with new life, both expected and surprising –we anticipate with you

This Mother's Day, we walk with you. Mothering is not for the faint of heart and we have real warriors in our midst. We remember you.

We stand with you.

So as we sing this last song we invite all women to come and we want to stand with you. So as the women come, as we sing, we want others to come and to place their hands on your shoulders or head, we want people to stand behind you, we want to remember you and celebrate who you are through Jesus Christ.