

September Leadership Circle



VIRTUE CORNER

As we embark on this 4 month examination of the Lumen Value of Faith, there are four lumen virtues that make us men of faith. The first is actually not a virtue at all, but all our lumen virtues require prayer to sustain them. So let's focus on prayer this month!

Prayer is more than asking God for things – much more. Prayer is more than “saying prayers” – much more. Prayer is a way of life. Prayer is the ongoing relationship, your constant exchange of thoughts, viewpoints, ideas, and emotions with God. A Christian walks through life at Christ's side; prayer is the conversation that happens along the way. He deserves it, and we need it.

Prayer isn't a virtue but it needs virtue to support it. Does a ship benefit from turning its bow so the wind is in its sails? Is it helped by finding the deep and strong currents that flow doggedly on towards its destination, no matter the weather? Does its captain rejoice at having good maps, a trustworthy compass, a solid keel, a firm rudder, and faithful sailors? Prayer is all these things for the soul, because in prayer the soul turns its attention to God and God pours his grace into the soul.

Prayer is more than useful, however; it's necessary. Here's how one modern apologist explains it: “...One simply cannot be a Christian without prayer, any more than one can be a Christian without faith or good works. What communication is to our marriage relationship with our spouse, prayer is to our relationship with God. If we say we love God but do not pray, we lie. For love is intimacy, and intimacy is communication, and communication with God is prayer. If God is necessary, prayer is necessary, for prayer is our spiritual lifeline to God. In prayer, we ‘plug in to God,’ the source of all good; we ‘charge our spiritual batteries,’ we feed our souls. Without prayers our souls starve.” (From “Catholic Christianity” by Peter Kreeft)

Prayer fills the soul with the Holy Spirit, who never travels without his gifts. So if you want more “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22) in your life, intensify your prayer.

“He who neglects mental prayer doesn't need a devil to carry him to hell, for he brings himself there with his own hands.”

— St Teresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church



GOSPEL REFLECTION (30 MIN)

“The Greatest Commandment”

1 Kings 19: 7 - 15

7 But the angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him, and ordered, "Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!" 8 Elijah got up, ate and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb. 9 There he came to a cave, where he took shelter. But the word of the LORD came to him, "Why are you here, Elijah?" 10 He answered: "I have been most zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts, but the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life." 11 Then the LORD said, "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will be passing by." A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD - but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake - but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake there was fire - but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. 13 When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, "Elijah, why are you here?" 14 He replied, "I have been most zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. But the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life." 15 "Go, take the road back to the desert near Damascus," the LORD said to him. "When you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king of Aram.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Context. Elijah is distraught because the Israelites do not respond well to his God given message. After they seek to kill him, Elijah escapes and falls into a deep depression. So much so, that he asks God to take his life. God leads him to an encounter of himself in prayer. List some initial characteristics of prayer seen in this passage?
2. What other famous events of the Old and New Testament happen on a mountain? Anything in common with those encounters with God and this one? Anything different?
3. There were moments in history where God was present in the earthquake, wind and fire. But not this time. God comes in silence. Why is that important for the emotionally weakened prophet? What lesson does that teach us about how God comes to us in prayer?
4. As a result of his encounter with God's whisper, Elijah heads back toward the place where they sought to kill him. Does this remind us of another figure of the New Testament? How important is obedience to God's voice in growing in prayer?
5. Elijah has been zealous for God and has worked hard for him, yet he was still despairing. Working for God does not ensure one is working with God. What lessons can you take from Elijah for your own prayer life?





CASE DISCUSSION (30 MIN)

2 ways to go about it. Read the Case and discuss afterwards how it can apply to your leadership, parenting style. Or ask a member to voluntarily offer their challenges in practicing humility at home, in the work place or in their lumen action (volunteer work). The circle can offer some personal experiences on how they have confronted and resolved similar difficulties.

“Christians in the World”

The example of the early Christians and how they exercised their influence by way of “testimony”.

<http://business1110ktek.com/articles/blogs/jim-daly/two-stories-about-prayer>

On the 60th annual observance of the National Day of Prayer, James Daly shared two stories that accentuate and highlight the necessity of daily conversation with God. Both of them involve little children, who are always some of life’s best teachers. I bet you have all had similar conversations with your children or grandchildren.

As little Deborah sat down to eat dinner with her parents she instinctively reached for her fork. “Please hold on,” her father replied. “We haven’t said grace yet.” This exasperated the girl, who was tired and hungry. “Daddy,” she said with a sigh, “why can’t we just pray once a week? Why do we have to ask for our daily bread every day?”

Her older brother, wiser and eager to set her straight, weighed in before the dad could answer. “You don’t think we want stale bread, do you?” he said.

Inadvertently, that fellow was confirming the importance of regular prayer.

Then there is four-year-old Melinda. Her favorite story was “The Three Little Pigs” which she asked her mom or dad to read every single night before bed. They gladly obliged, but after several months, her father got a bright idea. He recorded the story on tape and told her to simply press “play” before jumping under the covers. She resisted.

“But, honey,” he told her, “you can still hear it.”

“Yes,” she replied, “but I can’t sit in its lap.”

Amazingly, the Creator of the Universe is eager to spend time with you and with me, but the only way we can experience conversation and communion with Him is through personal and family and community prayer.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the main values of prayer brought out in these dialogs with children?
2. How do I bring prayer into my personal life? The Lumen manual offers some great little prayers to help with this. Can anyone list some of the titles of those prayers?
3. How do I bring prayer into my family life? Are my spouse and I on the same page here?
4. Can I bring prayer into my business life a bit more? Does anyone have examples of how they have done that successfully.



Self-Assessment and Key Takeaways (10 min)

Core Values Assessment. Spend 10 minutes in silence assessing positive and negative examples of how you live this lumen virtue of prayer in your relationship with others and God. What times work best for you to prayer and what essential elements do you include in your prayer. The below quadrant can help in jotting down some of your assessment as well as a tool to jot notes down during this Lumen Circle.

What struck me in this circle and how I might apply these inspirations to my THINKING. What CRITICAL ISSUES am I facing? What are the biggest CHALLENGES with these issues I face and what OPPORTUNITIES does it present.

Prayer:

Family:

Business:

Lumen Action:

What ACTION STEPS can I take now or long term? Develop a concrete resolution for how you can improve in your efforts to exercise Influence in your interactions with others during the next month. Your resolution should be a specific action or activity that is easily measured.



Resources:

<http://arkhousepress.com/practical-prayer-keys-to-business-success.html>

<http://businessasmission.com/7-prayer-habits-of-highly-effective-people-popular/>

The Great Conversation by Peter Kreeft

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Section IV

Prayer for Beginners by Peter Kreeft

The Power of a Praying Husband/Wife/Parent by Stormie Omartian

The Wisdom of the Ages on Prayer

Trouble and perplexity drive me to prayer and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble. (Philip Melanchthen)

The value of consistent prayer is not that He will hear us, but that we will hear Him. (William McGill)

We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties. (Oswald Chambers)

I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. (Abraham Lincoln)

God tells us to burden him with whatever burdens us. (Author Unknown)

Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered. (George Meredith)

The sovereign cure for worry is prayer. (William James)

