

Grow in Faith - Prayer and Study

When our early ancestors arrived in the Middletown Valley, they traveled with few possessions but among those possessions they brought with them was their treasured Bible and Catechism, in German of course. Many of these early settlers couldn't read so they depended on one another to share what the Bible said. Not being able to read did not discourage them from learning what was between the covers of the Bible. From these times together, Middletown had its earliest Bible Study.



Prayer was and is still important. In 1859 the Christian Denominations within Middletown gathered for prayer weekly as the tensions of a Civil War mount up. 1861 the first known National Day of Prayer was held in Zion and this is still observed today on the first Thursday of the month of May. During the first week of January each year the Reformed Church and Zion would gather for Worship and Prayer each night for one week and pray for the coming year and thanks for the previous year. This observance was held for over 60 years. In 1975 the Men's Prayer Breakfast began and during the same year Zion's prayer chain was formed.

In February 1967, Pastor Hoover introduced the idea of doing the Bethel Bible Study here at Zion. It was three years before the study began but it was one of the most successful Bible Studies ever held at the church. There were over 30 members trained to lead the study and well over 200 participants. The course was two years long covering both the Old Testament and the New. Many of our older members remember this study and still talk about it today.

Another church wide Bible Study was just held a few years ago called "Unbinding the Gospel." Just a few short of 200 members participated in this study which was for only 8 weeks. This study has helped us to open up to one another and strengthened us to share, grow and serve. From this study the prayer wall on the east side of the Sanctuary was introduced.

Today Zion still depends on the power of prayer for our church and its future and the needs of its members. Each Monday morning this group of prayer warriors gather to lift up any concern to God knowing nothing is too big for him to tackle.

We all know, at least in our heads that prayer is important and should be a part of our daily lives...not just once a day but a communion of walking with God, sometimes talking but a great deal more of listening. At times, we grow through dry spells where we get away from the practice of prayer because life gets in the way or maybe you don't know what to pray for. Don't let this stop you from praying!

We are to pray without ceasing. God must consider prayer a top priority for his children. If we go without praying then we tend to focus more on ourselves and what we desire instead of God's will and who is wanting to shift our attentions on others and their needs. Praying is a privilege. What greater honor than to have access to the One who rules over All creation.



Conversation is a vital part in the growing of any relationship. Honest, truthful and humble words with God are a sign of a healthy relationship. We should pray because we face a trial before us. Prayer is a deterrent to sin because we expose ourselves and the excuses we use in sinning. Prayer makes a difference.

Here are a few things to consider praying on for the future of our church. Pray for families, Christian life practices, our children and the education system, your neighborhood, our ability to walk in faith, avoiding sin, growth in faith, loving God and serving others in His love. For the future of our church and the Church of Christ, our pastors and lay leaders, being Christ centered, raising up witnesses, servants within the church, our spiritual and financial well being. Pray for our nation and its leaders. Use the prayer wall in the sanctuary for your concerns and the concerns of others. Prayer ministers are available at worship services. Speak to one of them who are available. Your concerns will be held in the strictest of confidence. Prayer team meets every Monday morning to lift up any and all concerns of the church. Prayer is Powerful and it was a way of changing things. Try it...you'll like it!

