

CRIBB<S>NOTE – OCTOBER 21, 2007

What is prayer? Do you pray? When do you pray? Why do you pray? How do you pray? Where do you pray? To whom do you pray? What do you expect from prayer? Does prayer matter?

You are invited to answer each question one at a time. Don't just read each one and rush on. Go back and think about prayer. What is it? How do you understand the meaning of prayer?

Many times we pray by asking God to do something for us. It is a monologue filled with requests, demands, pleas, and expressions. It is our inner voice addressing our needs and concerns. Does that sound familiar? Perhaps less often we pray by intentionally slowing ourselves and listening intently beyond ourselves for a stirring Spirit. Have you done that? In your life, is prayer a verb or a noun? Think about it. Is your answer based on situations or circumstances, or does prayer remain constant no matter what? Is prayer a string of words streaming through your mind and flowing from your mouth? Is it a consciousness of Supreme Presence? Do you wait for Divine Energy to move within you? Is prayer your private moment? Is it open and public shared in corporate or communal space? What is prayer?

Have you prayed today? Is it constant or sporadic? Is it forced? Does it come naturally from within you? Can you live without praying? When do you pray? Is it when you eat: at breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Or, do you pray as the Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor suspects, like when you brush your teeth: "once in the morning and once at night as part of your spiritual hygiene program?"

Why do you pray? As an anguished scream when danger surrounds you, "Oh my God?" Do you think of prayer in a way similar to how the Rev. Dr. William Epps of Second Baptist Church in Los Angeles describes our sense of God as our personal "Cosmic Bellhop?" Do we beg for more: more blessings, more mercy, and more goodies?

Do you pray quietly? Do you pray out loud? Are your prayers written? Is your prayer an endless conversation? Who listens to your prayer? Where do your prayers go? To whom do you pray? How do you know? Think about it. When was the last time your prayers were answered? What happened? Have you been fervent with your prayers of gratitude? Really?

In what ways does prayer make a difference in your life? Who is praying for you? Do you have a prayer partner?

Somewhere someone is depending on you to pray with or for them. Do you know who that person is? Given all the events taking place in the world, do you think prayer actually matters?

It is impossible for me to imagine life without prayer. Each breath is a prayer. Each moment is filled with prayer. Every human encounter is another prayer answered. God designs all human beings to possess and depend on the essential element of prayer. It is prayer that actualizes our reality and puts us in touch with love that is the Ultimate Truth: God.