

Prayer as Participation

Active Prayer: - praying for us to except God’s will, praying to change God to conform to our will, praying to empty ourselves of any desires.

Do you find yourself in any of these categories?

The Pharisees prayed for perfect morality, believing this would usher in the kingdom of God. Others pray to empty themselves to become hollow and in harmony with the universe. “Neither active nor passive prayer is how Jesus prayed.”

The Middle Voice – types of prayer

1. Active Voice – I give advice.
2. Passive Voice – I am given advice.
3. Middle Voice – I am joining the action of another.

Eugene Peterson wrote – “We neither manipulate God (active voice) or are manipulated by God (passive voice). We are involved in the action and participate in its results but do not control or define it (middle voice). Prayer takes place in the middle voice.”

What does this mean to you?

When we pray in the middle voice, we are participating in God’s action and we benefit from God’s action. We join God. Like a flowing river, we are going with God. The river keeps flowing no matter what.

Jesus’s longest recorded prayer is John 17:1-26 - *“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them.....”*

What do you notice about the flow and content of Jesus’s prayer?

Adam and Eve were in a middle voice relationship with the Father when they were created. They worked with God in carrying for the creations of this earth. But when sin intervened, the relationship became an active voice and passive voice relationship. “Prayer is the recovery of our role in God’s created order, the recovery of our true identity and the relationship that defines that identity to us.”

Can you be in a middle voice relationship with the Father?

“The aim is not to get God in on what I think he should be doing. Rather, the aim of prayer is to get us in on what God is doing, become aware of it, join it, and enjoy the fruit of participation.”