

“Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you; who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness”. ~ Psalm 89:15-16 NIV

Our small group is using a resource called The Way of Prayer, Companions in Christ, a small group experience in spiritual formation from Upper Room Books, Jane Vennard with Stephen D. Bryant. This past week’s material had to do with the use of different scriptural images of God as aids in our personal prayer lives. One of the exercises we were encouraged to participate in, before our group meeting and discussion, was to come up with a list of scriptural names and images of God that would help us to vary and deepen our conversation with God.

I found this approach to prayer very helpful. Its one more way to “daily thrust our souls into the deep places of God”, to transcend our circumstances and be carried by God’s spirit, like the mighty ocean currents carry icebergs forward against the surface currents of the ocean. Some of the suggested images and prayers offered by Jane Venerard & Stephen Bryant are: God of the Stillness, quiet my soul. ~ Lord of the Dance: lead and I will follow ~ Gentle Shepherd, watch over me ~ My Rock and My Salvation: teach me to cling to you ~ Compassionate Listener: I trust you with my secrets ~ Blessed healer: I need balm for my soul.

When our group met, we shared more images and prayers that had surfaced from our own study and prayer times: Wonderful Counselor: guide me in your ways ~ Creator God: create in me a new spirit ~ Prince of Peace: wash over me with your River of Peace ~ Redeemer God: transform my life ~ Father of Truth : lead me into your paths of Righteousness ~ Comforter God : hold me in your strong arms ~ My Strength and My Shield: protect me from harm.

The possibilities are endless, the sources numerous; Old and New Testament Scriptures, your favorite hymnal or chorus book, even devotional guides. After spending some time in silent prayer, where each of us focused on one name or image, we shared with one another how God had met us in that time. I challenged the group, as I now challenge you, to spend time exploring this means of approaching God in praise, adoration, gratitude, thanksgiving and supplication. Its a wonderful way to know the compassionate and caring character of our great Triune God!

“Blessed are those who know your Love, who walk in the light of your countenance!

Blessed are those who call upon your Name and extol truth and justice”!

~ Psalm 89:15-16 Psalms for Praying, Nan C. Merrill

Under God’s Mercy, Howie

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