

From Gary Edvenson:

One of the greatest joys of being an elder at Salem is the privilege we have of praying for those in our fellowship. Over the past year the elder board has been giving more time in our regular meetings to praying for the concerns of individuals. We also love to spend time praying with individuals and families as they celebrate their joys or ask for prayers of healing.

“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.” James 5:14-15

These times of prayer are always sweet times of fellowship with each other and with our gracious and loving God.

For more than a year now our brother and fellow elder, Thomas Inyu, has been struggling with cancer. One consequence of this has been that he has not been able to attend either our elder board meetings or church regularly. This past Tuesday evening for the first 45 minutes or so of our regularly scheduled elder meeting we all gathered at the Inyu home. We listened to him share and we prayed and shared communion with him and Joyce. We were all encouraged by God’s presence with us and by the courage and trust in the Lord that Thomas and his family are demonstrating. Even in the face of pain and uncertainty about the future he is rejoicing that because of his troubles people are coming to believe in Jesus. Please continue to pray for the Inyu family. Pray for healing, strength, courage, and faithfulness for them.

God hears the prayers of his people. I’ve been thinking recently about praying with others and have been encouraged and challenged by the example of the believers in the early church. After Peter and John healed a lame man, taught the amazed crowds about the resurrection and Lordship of Jesus, were put in prison, and were ultimately released it says this in Acts 4:

“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord” they said,....” Acts 4:23-24

Their prayer concludes with these words:

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant, Jesus.” Acts 4:29-30

God clearly answered their prayer! I encourage you to look up and read how God did this in the verses following Acts 4:30. And he will answer our prayers also. I hope that each of you are finding opportunities to “raise your voices together in prayer to God” with other believers. If this has not been part of your recent experience, consider joining a Life Group or other small group where it can be.

In the weeks ahead you will likely be hearing more about the proposed new vision for our fellowship, and we ask you to join us in asking God for the following:

- For leaders to communicate with clarity, creativity, and love.
- For leaders to be humbly open to feedback and to be discerning in making adjustments.
- For individuals to get excited about the vision.
- For unity in Christ as we move forward.
- For the hearts of those we live, work, study and play with to be softened and open to the Gospel as we prayerfully seek, in God’s power, to implement the vision.