

Charles Stanley, talking about why it's so important that we have a regular prayer life says, "Because then, we become so accustomed and attuned to God's voice, that we will recognize him, regardless of all the other voices competing for our attention."

Loving and Forgiving God, we are awed and grateful this day to be able to come before you, the God of the universe. The God whose power and majesty are so incredibly great, and yet whose love and care is so incredibly deep that you would stoop to the level of humanity in order to, as the hymn says, "walk with us and talk with us, and tell us we are your own." What a blessing. And so we come to hear your word to us today. Because we know that we are surrounded by so many false voices that try to lead us down the wrong path. Voices that tell us we are not good enough or smart enough or attractive enough. Voices that make us believe that our worth is based on our social status, on what we own, on how busy we are. Voices that tell us that we deserve more, we deserve better – both from others and from you. Voices that sway our attitudes toward prejudice and judgment, and keep us close-minded toward those with differing opinions. Voices that distract us from sitting quietly in your presence, listening to what you would say to us. Forgive us Lord, and help us once again attend to those words found in the psalms, "Be still and know that I am God."

And Lord, as a community together, we seek to pray for others. We thank you for the rescue of the boys soccer team in Thailand. For the ways in which people of all nationalities and ethnicities came and worked together. We ask that you would continue to be not only with them and their families, but for all those who put their lives on the line to secure their safety. Lord, we continue to pray for our world, our country and our leaders, as well as leaders around the world, as discussions are held and decisions are made. Help us to remember there is power in prayer to you, our God. More power in you than in any human being. And so we come to you and we trust you and we make our wishes known to you. There are others we wish to lift up, and so hear us now.

Lord, even as we have heard your voice to us, we pray to be a voice for you in our community. And so hear us now as collectively we say our John Wesley Prayer...

*Dear Lord, we want John Wesley to be a strong and vital church in our community. And we want to be guided by your vision and plan for us. As we move into the future, please lead us all in our thoughts, our*

*discussions, and our decisions. Show us what you would have us do and how you would have us do it. And help us always remember that John Wesley is your church, not ours – may your will be done. In Christ's name we pray. Amen*