

**Sunday, September 16, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study – James 5:13-20  
“Power of Prayer”**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, have participants share a meaningful time of prayer. (Allow them to share a circumstance or person they would like to pray for. Have the group pray for that circumstance or person.)

**James 5:13-20. Context.** Earlier in his letter, James had warned against the abuse and misuse of speech as it reflects sinful behavior and the ways of the world. In this week's reading, the conclusion of his letter, he describes how what we say and what we pray can heal us and build us up both as individuals and as the church. Prayer directed to God will bring us through tough times. Forgiveness and healing will come through the words we use with each other. James especially commends the power of prayer, and the virtue of speaking the truth in love with members of the community that seem to be headed in the wrong direction.

**Read James 5:13-20**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

**Read James 5:13-20 again.**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

- What is possible for prayer to achieve, according to this passage? Do you share James' confidence about prayer?
- Note the communal aspect of prayer cited in this passage. We should call for others to pray for us (v. 14). Healing and forgiveness were means toward being more fully present in community. We should pray for one another (v. 16). Those who wander from the community are brought back together (vv. 19-20). Prayer is often viewed as an individual activity. James suggests that prayer is for the building up of the community. How might this group and this church hold intentional times of corporate prayer? [In worship, prayer stations, litanies, prayers during Communion, and so on.]
- Often, people focus on the words that will be said in prayer. However, one definition of prayer is, “Intentionally being in the presence of God.” How might this understanding of prayer help relieve the burden of having the “right” words for prayer?

- Why do you think James, who focused so much of this book encouraging faith that is displayed in actions, end by encouraging prayer?
- How might prayers and actions be complementary responses to God's grace?
- What might God be calling you to do as a response to this passage?

**Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Almighty God, part of your call for us to pray is a reminder that we are in a dependent relationship with you. We acknowledge that we don't always know the words to pray and that even our most articulate prayers are requests or petitions for your healing presence that would form us into your beloved community. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.