

**New St. James Presbyterian Church, London, Ontario**  
**Sunday, December 9, 2018**  
**Rev. Dr. David Thompson**

**Why the importance of being of one accord? (Greek word Homothumadon)**

Johnny paid his way through college by waitering in a restaurant.

"What's the usual tip?" asked a customer.

"Well," said Johnny, "this is my first day, but my support group said that, if I got five dollars out of you, I'd be doing great."

"Is that so?" growled the customer. "In that case, here's twenty dollars."

"Thanks. I'll put it in my college fund," Johnny said.

"By the way, what are you studying?" asked the customer.

"Applied psychology."

Text:

"If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade you at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, **then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind.**"

If you have been a Christian for awhile you probably know that there are three answers to prayer: Yes, no and slow. No and slow are the hardest to deal with, especially in prayer.

On one occasion mentioned in Luke 11 verse one, Jesus disciples asked him how to pray. Out of that came the **Lord's Prayer**. It can be strongly argued that in addition to prayer in secret, which Christ also advocated when he said "when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray in secret", he also advocated the importance of **group** prayer. We recognize that today when we all say the Lord's Prayer together as a group.

Many people think that was all he taught his disciples about prayer. How are we to pray? Answer? The Lord's prayer, end of story.

But there is striking evidence that the historical Jesus taught his followers to gather in small prayer circles as an essential part of the formation of the Christian church. And he went further than that as we find in St. Paul when Paul carried on the legacy. Paul said: "**be united in your convictions and united in your love with a common purpose and a common mind.**"

The word Homothumadon is a Greek word used 10 times in the book of the Acts out of its 12 occurrences in the New Testament.

It is essentially a musical term, a compound of two words meaning "rush along" and "in unison". It means with one mind, with one accord, with one passion. When a Beethoven symphony comes together, a diversity of instruments begins to rush along together with passion and common purpose and common mind and the result is an amazing possibility of beauty to lift the human spirit.

This is how we are to pray, and then when we do this, something wonderful has the possibility of happening.

In Acts 2 verse one in the King James version it says "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all **with one accord** in one place." Thus, began the formation of the Christian Church with the coming of the Holy Spirit. It was a very big deal. The preparation was to be in homothumadon... of one accord and passion with a common purpose and a common mind.

The prayer model for the book of the Acts was also to be in homothumadon, the word described how they are to pray together and so in that state they were “in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.”

The early church ate together from house to house eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. (Homothumadon).

The apostles used to meet **with one accord** in Solomon’s porch in the Temple, (homothumadon) and then miracles took place, so much so that the sick were taken out into the streets and laid on beds and sleeping mats in the hope that at least the shadow of Peter might fall across some of them as he went past. People even came crowding in from the towns round about Jerusalem, bringing their sick with them...and all of them were cured.

I have been reading Lynne McTaggart’s new book The Power of Eight and she has two pages in it on the word homothumadon.

Charles Spurgeon a British Baptist preacher came to Lynne’s attention with his exposition of the word homothumadon. Spurgeon said that this is an overlooked secret of the early church. Spurgeon says: Over and over again Luke stresses that what they did, they did together, all of them, united and unanimous.”

According to Spurgeon and Scripture Jesus gave authority to his disciples to cure diseases. They were to go from village to village preaching the kingdom of God and healing the sick. They were to do this with one mind and common purpose.

Lynne has done a lot of research with the concept of intention. Her conclusion is that a group of eight (but it could be from three to 12 people) when they come into a state of homothumadon together, with a single positive intention, healing can take place. She has experimented with the concept of peace on earth and as we speak there are groups holding intentions for Peace across the planet- our theme for Advent.

The group of eight can all be in one place or even united on the internet with a common time to get together. The group clears their mind from distractions and agree on a common intention. If in one place, they often link hands in a circle and hold the intention in silence for 10 minutes.

What surprised her was that the group itself experienced healing as well as the person prayed for. In other words, there was a blow back effect on the group.

Alan Cohen in his book Dare to be yourself tells the story of a man who had AIDS back in the days when there was no treatment. When the man told the seminar that Alan was holding that he had AIDS, Alan stopped the seminar and asked everyone to stand, extend their arms and send him love. They did that. It was a homothumadon moment.

Some years later when Alan was holding a seminar in the same place the man returned and told the audience that he had been healed and no longer had AIDS.

When I read that story, it resonated with me for I know from my own experience as a minister **that love heals.**

In the Jewish tradition a group of at least ten people called minyans come together to pray for the healing of a member of the congregation in public prayer. The tradition is old and Jesus would have known of it.

Lynne counsels that the intention or prayer is better when it is very clear and specific. Visualization seems to strengthen the intention. We play through the mind what we wish to experience as if it were already a present reality.

Jesus said this about visualization: “Whatsoever things you ask for in prayer, believe that you have them already and they shall be yours.”

He also said “Where two or three of you are gathered together there am I in the midst.”

Dawn Stobbe was a nurse who had the symptoms of cancer. Her doctor did tests. The results were terrifying: a large tumour and the blood tests indicated the possible presence of ovarian cancer.

Dawn thought to herself “I’m going to die! She wept.

She stayed calm as she told her daughters that she had cancer. They were teens and when she saw the fear in their eyes her heart nearly broke in two. So not wanting to burden them with her fear she said that she had to run to the store.

On the way she pictured in her mind all the faces she loved. Rich her husband, her girls and their five other children through previous marriages, her parents and her friends.

“O God she pleaded, please don’t take my life. I still have so much to live for.”

She went to her priest who gave her the best advice in the world. He said “**Don’t do this alone! Let others help you!**”

The next day all the faces she had pictured who loved her were in her home surrounding her with their love. *Hmothoumadon!*

They continued to meet and support her through the surgery. The surgeons took her fallopian tubes and ovaries. One doctor told her “You only have a 15% chance of making it. Your only hope is chemotherapy.”

She bargained like crazy with God. She would be a better everything if only she would get a second chance at life.

She had six chemo treatments, one every three weeks. Sometimes they made her very sick but always a friend would show up with dinner or to take the girls out. Her friends even raised money to look after the medical bills. *Homothoumadon*. Buoyed by their love and support, she read books and visualized getting well.

All her support group stayed positive. Her daughters particularly said, “You are going to be alright mom.”

After the last chemo treatment, the moment came to find out whether she was cancer free. The doctors were to do 100 biopsies one in every place they feared the cancer might have spread to. “To be honest” they said, “we don’t expect you to be cancer free.” Her chances of survival were slim.

Dawn could feel terror creeping into every fibre of her being. A friend who had visited her in her home had given her a hand painted rock which Dawn had put into a drawer. Before Dawn left for the hospital she reached into the drawer and pulled it out. She read the words; “Expect a miracle!” She slipped it into her purse.

The stone was still in her purse the next day when she opened her eyes, after the surgeries. She found a pretty woman with dark hair and a white dress leaning over her hospital bed.

*She must be a nurse Dawn thought.* But she had no pills in her hand, no blood pressure monitor to hook up. Instead she looked at Dawn kindly and asked, “Are you the one looking for a miracle?”

Confused Dawn stammered “Yes.” *But Dawn wondered how did she know?* But before the question could be asked the pretty woman vanished.

The next morning, the woman in white was beside her once again. In her hand was a plaque that read “Miracles happen every day!” Is this what you are looking for?” she asked gently.

Tears sprang to Dawn’s eyes but before she could say a word once again, she was gone. As Dawn gazed at the plaque a funny tingling sensation coursed throughout her body. Was she a nurse or an angel?

Rich came in and said to Dawn “The results of the biopsies are in. They were negative- each and every one!”

Dawn was cancer free. Homothumadon, and as the pretty woman in white came to assure her, **hopes are never foolish, and prayers are never wasted.**

“Whatever things you ask for in prayer, believe that you have them already and they shall be yours.”

In other words, Expect a miracle. Miracles happen everyday.