

Hope and Prayer

Aim : *This piece is a reminder that we don't have to adopt a certain method or words to pray. God wants to hear our prayers borne out of honesty and truth. The angel and archangel provide humorous comment and the three pray-ers represent how different people might feel as they approach God in prayer.*

Characters :

Sam, Jo, Dee - any age, either gender

Angel & Archangel - any age, either gender

Props/Costumes :

Notepad & pen for angel

You could give the angel and archangel costume if you like, although we chose not to

Notes : *If possible the angel and archangel should be in a different place to perform and if they can be a)raised up and b)at opposite sides of the performance space so they speak across or over the pray-ers all the better.*

The piece was written as an introduction to the theme and the names are purposefully appropriate to both male and female so the speaker could address the Sams, Jos and Dees in the audience, based on the drama they had just seen.

The tone of the pray-ers should be natural, compared to the more stylized and humorous portrayal of the angels.

Hope and Prayer

Sam, Jo and Dee are standing in a row on stage. The two angels are elsewhere, ideally above the audience or congregation and at different sides of the room so they speak across the other characters and congregation. They are not noticeable until they start speaking.

Sam) Well, we've shared news, shall we pray?

Jo) Absolutely

Dee) Okay.

Sam) Where two or more are gathered and all that.

Jo) There shall the Lord dwell

Dee) Right

Sam) Let's just offer Him our praise and what's on our hearts

Jo) Like fragrance to Heaven

Dee) Fine.

Sam) Okay. Let's pray. . . (*Jo and Dee close their eyes. Sam addresses God with eyes open. Her tone is enthusiastic and joyful and the pace is quick!*) Lord, we just want to praise you, with our whole beings, for all that you've given us. We thank you for your son Jesus Christ, for His mercy, His grace, His love. We thank you for the cross, the sacrifice of love made once for all to give us the chance to know you for ourselves, to live in you, to hope in you. We thank you that you died, and that you conquered death so we can all live in faith in the present and hope for the future. We give you all that is due your Holy name. We give you honour and praise and blessing and power . .

Sam, Dee and Jo all freeze. Angel is seen furiously scribbling notes in a little book

Angel) Hang on a minute. I can't keep up.

Archangel) What happened to that Shorthand for Angels course you were doing?

A) I changed to the Advanced Flying course. It sounded more exciting.

AA) When are you going to start taking your responsibilities seriously? People need to know their prayers are being heard.

A) Well I heard it all right, You couldn't miss it.

AA) Heard *and registered*

A) Ah.

AA) Where have you got to?

A) (*Reading*) Er . . The cross, the sacrifice of love

AA) Right. And so Sam wants to give God honour, praise, blessing . .

A) Can't I just put "etc"?

AA) NO!

A) But surely God knows all this anyway? I mean they tell Him all the time, they write poems about it, they sing about it, they draw pictures, they even dance about it. Why go on about it? Besides, I get tired to-ing and fro-ing all the time. (*Acting this out*) Here's some praise, God, and some more, oh and a bit more, just for a change.

AA) Hmm. And *that* is precisely why *you* are an Angel, and I am an *Archangel*.

A) Why? Because you've got bigger wings?

AA) No

A) Because you've got a better memory?

AA) No

A) Because you've got a bigger mouth and aren't afraid to use it?

AA) No!! Because *I* have a greater understanding of God's grace, His love, of the hope He can bring, of the delight he feels for his children. A delight that led Christ to the cross for each one of them. No wonder they want to praise him with every breath.

Sam, Dee and Jo unfreeze

Sam) And Lord, I just thank you for all the blessings you've given me, for the joy it is to know you, for the privilege it is to be known by you, to hear you speaking to me

A) And what does God say?

AA) He says – I love you. I delight in you. You're my child, my precious child.

Sam) Amen.

Sam closes her eyes and Jo opens hers to pray. This time the tone is formal and rather automatic, as though these words have been learnt by rote. The pace is fast and the speech monotonous.

Jo) Heavenly Father, I pray in your hallowed name. I thank you that you have redeemed the sinners, that you have set the captives free, that you have found the lost, that you have empowered the slaves, that you have washed clean with the cleansing blood of Christ, that you have justified through the penalty of death, that you have taken once again your rightful place within the heavenly realms, surrounded by the praises of angels

Sam, Jo and Dee freeze

A) Aah, well that's nice

AA) What is?

A) That we get a mention. I always think that's nice. Even if it's just a bit part, you know, crowd scenes generally – the heavenly hosts, the praising throng

AA) You seem to have managed to write all that one down to pass on

A) Well, they're well recognized phrases aren't they. Even the basic Angel Shorthand course covers all those.

AA) And what do you think of what you've heard?

A) Well – it's all true isn't it?

AA) Yes. Do you think Jo knew that as she prayed?

A) Well she's got all the right words

AA) Yes, in her head, but what did you hear from her heart.

A) Oh you know I'm not as tuned in as you. I didn't get anything from the heart.

AA) No . . .neither did I

A) But she's in church. That must count for something. Besides, some people like to keep Him at arms' length, don't they? Surely that's just their way?

AA) Did *he* keep *them* at arms' length? Stay in control, not take any risks?

A) Well no. not exactly.

AA) You see I was there. That day. When His arms were held out, by nails, by love. Gasping His last few breaths. Calling out to the Father. "Why have you forsaken me?"

A) And being able to do nothing to help?

AA) Exactly, knowing that to gain we must first lose. Everything, it felt like for that one moment in eternity. That's how He loves.

A) It must break His heart when people don't see it.

AA) Over and over again.

Sam, Jo and Dee unfreeze

Jo) And you deserve our duty and gratitude as you intercede on our behalf

A) And what does God say?

AA) He says – I love you. I delight in you. You're my child, my precious child.

Jo) Amen.

Jo closes her eyes and Dee opens hers to pray. This time the tone is uncertain and the pace slow and hesitant.

Dee) Lord . .erm. Well, I'm here. And that's about all I can say really. I'm not even sure you'd want to talk to me at the moment . . I, er, can't say the right words like the others, not without feeling like a hypocrite anyway. I mean, I love you, but that all gets a bit lost somehow –what with work and family stuff going on, church things and all the other stuff that, well, I'm glad no-one else knows about and I'm terrified cos I know you do. I don't even know where to start. I know I should be full of joy and peace and love and hope – but I don't feel those things. Sometimes not at all. I don't know why I'm talking to you really, why I'm here. I suppose it's partly habit, partly hoping that the old feelings will come back. Oh this is hopeless.

Sam, Dee and Jo freeze

A) It's not, is it?

AA) No, no it's not

A) But it can feel like that down there sometimes can't it?

AA) It certainly can.

A) So where do they start?

AA) Just where Dee has – by being honest. By telling Him how you feel. By looking for the light in the midst of the darkness.

A) I suppose that's when hope is real isn't it?

AA) Exactly. When we cling on to what we believe. What we've been promised. After the despair of that moment of death, the glory of New Life was a celebration like no other before or since.

A) After the suffering comes freedom, glorious freedom.

AA) We can see that from up here you see

A) Yes. But how can that help Dee?

Sam, Dee and Jo unfreeze

Dee) The thing is God, sometimes I try and *not* believe in you, think my life would be easier without faith. But I can't do it. It's as if I could let go of you, but you won't let go of me. So here I am. I just hope it's enough.

A) And what will He say? It's so long since I had doubts like that.

AA) Ah yes, but that's because you have the wonder of seeing Him face to face.

A) And him me.

AA) Hmm, well maybe that's a mixed blessing eh? . . . but to Dee, he says – I love you. I delight in you.
You're my child, my precious child.

Dee) Amen.

Sam) Help us Lord, to receive more of you

Jo) To know you better

Dee) To trust you more

Sam) To praise you

Jo) With words

Dee) And hearts. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

Jo) And the love of God

Sam) And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

All) Be with us all, evermore. Amen.

AA) They see in part, know in part

A) But one day they shall know in full

AA) Even as they are fully known.

A) For Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again.

AA looks at A and grins

A) What?

AA) No nothing. Just what you said then.

A) Oh. Did I sound like a proper Archangel?

AA) No. . . you sounded like a proper Anglican!