

Cheyenne Boon:

Good morning. Welcome to Morning Prayers. Today's service will begin with a response of reading from the black Appleton Psalter Book, Psalm number 135 found on page 68. Please remain masked and rise in body or spirit, to read responsibly by whole verse.

Cheyenne Boon:

Hallelujah. Praise the name of the Holy One. Give praise, you servants of the most high.

Congregation:

You who stand in the house of the Holy One, in the courts of the house of our God.

Cheyenne Boon:

Praise God for God is good. Sing praises to the Holy name, for it is lovely.

Congregation:

For you, O God have chosen Jacob for yourself and Israel for your own possession.

Cheyenne Boon:

For I know that you are great, that you are above all gods.

Congregation:

You do whatever pleases you in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the deeps.

Cheyenne Boon:

You bring up rain clouds from the ends of the earth. You send out lightning with the rain. You bring the winds out of your storehouse.

Congregation:

You send signs and wonders in the midst of Egypt against Pharaoh and all his servants.

Cheyenne Boon:

You gave their land to be an inheritance, an inheritance for Israel, your people.

Congregation:

O God, your name is everlasting. Your renown endures from age to age.

Cheyenne Boon:

For you give your people justice and show compassion to your servants.

Congregation:

Blessed be the most high out of Zion, who dwells in Jerusalem. Alleluia.

Choir:

(singing).

Isabella Nogues:

Good morning. In reading from the book of Philippians chapter two verses three through four, do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

When I first joined the PhD program in biostatistics, I was struck by the warmth and companionship between colleagues in my surrounding community. I was amazed by the emphasis on collaboration and sharing of knowledge by the common desire to attain the most fulfilling education and to develop the sharpest statistical and biological tools. This was all driven by a common mission that's surpassed the desire to produce cutting edge biomedical research. Together as a department, we aimed to develop statistical science tools that would potentially give rise to policies and practices in medicine that would improve the welfare of millions of patients throughout the world.

In the early PhD years, students would form a very strong bond with the members of their cohorts by extensively collaborating on problem sets and for year-long preparation for the intensive written qualifying exams. Collaboration was also emphasized in the research phase of the PhD. In addition to being supervised by our primary dissertation advisor, we were granted the opportunity to work alongside two more faculty members who would join our dissertation committee. The three committee members often coming from different backgrounds and professional trajectories were able to provide valuable insights and complementary opinions that would enrich the content of our doctoral research. We were also fortunate to be paired with post-doctoral research mentors throughout the PhD, who would help us navigate the more technical and challenging aspects of our work. During biweekly lab meetings, we were able to learn firsthand about the research of our peers and engage in spirited discussion and offer potential solutions to long-standing problems. We were also granted the opportunity to form external collaborations with various clinical teams in neighboring hospitals and medical institutions.

As time went on, I came to realize that the very emphasis on collaboration in my department is what truly allowed us to maximize the quality of our work. While all members in our community were highly talented on their own, the most impactful work was produced by merging complementary opinions of team members from various backgrounds and with different levels of experience. At times, it may be quite humbling for one to discover in working with others that their own knowledge on a given topic is far less advanced than they had come to believe. While a statistical tool developed by a biostatistician may be methodologically sound on its own, a medical expert may note that its results lacked the requisite clinical relevance to be introduced into routine clinical practice. A biostatistician, on the other hand, may notice that a standard patient diagnosis tool used by clinicians lacked the robustness and efficiency to perform well in the face of rare and complex diseases or may be incapable of generating results for a sufficiently large number of patients as needed.

In this sense, it is indeed useful to consider others as more knowledgeable than ourselves. By doing this we are by no means diminishing our own abilities and talents. We are merely acknowledging the gifts of those surrounding us. We are realizing that our own capacities can always be enhanced and complemented by the knowledge of our peers.

It is also important to keep in mind another goal, the importance of working to improve the welfare of others, of looking to the interests of others in faith, trusting that God will reward us for the efforts we make to think of those around us, and to help them as we can.

At Harvard, we are trained to maximize our intellectual potential and talent. This is materialized in the form of tangible accomplishments and highly acclaimed accolades, such as top grades, publication of cutting edge scientific research in high impact journals, and prestigious internships and job offers among many others. In working towards our individual goals, it is all too easy to be driven by personal ambition and the desire for prestige, both of which we tend to equate to self-fulfillment. However, these endeavors may feel incomplete if they're pursued for ourselves alone without considering the interest of others. Therefore, just as the Lord called us to serve our neighbors, it is instrumental to recognize the importance of serving those around us amid our own journeys.

Throughout my PhD. I have come to appreciate the value of service through teaching assistant positions and leadership roles in the PhD student committee. In teaching, we strive to serve our students by providing them with a fresh perspective, to better understand the course material, knowledge that they in turn will be able to channel into their research and share with the future generation of students. In the Student Committee, we are very fortunate to work closely the students and to help them resolve issues that are crucial to the success of their PhD careers. And ultimately, the very nature of biomedical research involves serving our broader community by making cutting edge discoveries that, beyond leading to the most prestigious levels of education, publications in the most cutting edge journals and overall societal acclaim, will prompt the development of novel policies and healthcare practices beneficial to patients throughout the world, leading to epidemics halted, patients made healthy, and physicians provided the tools to serve individuals. Thank you.

And I'd like to close with a very brief prayer. So dear, Lord, we are very grateful for the many talents with which you have gifted us. Please help us to be able to know to use these for the service of others, to further your mission and to further all that you intend for us to do on this earth. We pray for these things in your name. Amen.

Cheyenne Boon:

Now, if you'd please rise in body or spirit and join in praying the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Cheyenne Boon:

Now let us sing the hymn Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth, number 254 in your crimson Harvard Hymnal.

Congregation:

(singing)

This transcript was exported on Jan 28, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Cheyenne Boon:

As we go into this day, let us bless and keep one another. Let us make peace. Let us be at peace. May it be so, and may the church say amen.

Congregation:

Amen.