

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

RE: JESUS
OCTOBER 10 & 11, 2009
DOING LIFE TOGETHER (Pastor Jeff McNairn)

Big Idea: Prayer is an ongoing relationship with God in which we share life together.

When one looks at the life and teaching of Jesus in the area of prayer it becomes quite evident that prayer is about relationship and keeping conversation with God; a two-way dialogue of speaking and listening. Throughout the Scriptures we see Jesus living this truth - we see Him giving requests to His Father about life and ministry and we see Him listening to what His Father has for Him.

Open It

1. Describe a time in your life when God clearly answered one of your prayers
2. If prayer is so important why do we struggle so much with it?
3. If God is all-knowing why should we pray?

Dig Into It

4. Read Mark 1:35 and Luke 5:16. What do these verses teach us about busyness and Jesus' attitude toward prayer? "God is rarely found in the midst of noise and restlessness; instead He is the friend of silence." Mother Theresa
5. How Should we Pray? Read Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, Matthew 6:6-7, Mark 12:40, Luke 18:1,8-14.
6. Read 1 Thess. 5:17 and Eph. 6:18. What does it mean to pray without ceasing? How would you respond to someone who said, "I pray all throughout the day therefore I don't really need to set aside a specific time to just pray"?
7. Read Galatians 4:6, Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15-17.
 - What is a common word found in all 3 of these verses?
 - How did Jesus address God in the Mark passage? The word 'abba' is an Aramaic word that a child would use to address his earthly father - it would be like our use of the word 'daddy' or 'papa' - until Jesus no good Jew would dare use this word to address God - what does Jesus tell us about the Father by His use of this word?
 - How does this encourage you today?
 - What does this tell you about prayer?

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Prayer is about keeping company with God and like in any good relationship there needs to be communication, openness, and honesty. C.S. Lewis once said, "We must lay before God what is in us, not what ought to be in us". What's important in prayer is not how you say it but that you say it.

"The truth of the matter is, we all come to prayer with a tangled mass of motives – altruistic and selfish, merciful and hateful, loving and bitter...what I have come to see is that God is big enough to receive us with all our mixture." (Richard Foster, Prayer, pg.8)

Apply It

8. If Jesus needed pray to live a focused and productive life, why are we so presumptive to think we can do it without as much prayer? Is it time for a re-calibration in your life? What needs to go or what needs to happen to make prayer more central in your life? Read John 15:1-17 – what does Jesus say is pivotal in living a focused life?
9. "The heart of God is an open wound of love. He aches over our distance and preoccupation. He mourns that we do not draw near to Him. He grieves that we have forgotten Him. He weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness. He longs for our presence." (Richard Foster – author of well known book Celebration of Discipline – he penned these words after a vision that God gave him of the Lord's heart) Prayer is the key to God's heart and to a deeper, more meaningful relationship with Him. If there is not a part of your day designated to time alone spent with God (via prayer and Bible reading) – what do you need to do today to make that happen tomorrow and the day after that?

"Prayer is a mysterious, unfathomable, intense conversation with the Father, who will not give us formulas and principles but will give us Himself. The guidance He gives, of course, does not come in an instance, and it does not come as clearly as an email. But come it will for those who, like Jesus and the saints, seek out this place regularly." (Jesus Mean and Wild – Mark Galli)

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