

Thoughts and Prayers

Small Group Lesson

Luke 11:1-4 “Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” Jesus said, “This is how you should pray: “Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. Give us each day the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation.”

INTRO

When do you pray? Before meals? Before bed? Before a big game or when you have a test? Perhaps your prayer life looks like a Tweet or IG post. You know the posts. The ones that come after difficult moments in history where a flood of “thoughts and prayers” spread through social media. Oftentimes you’ll see comments like, “prayer won’t do anything right now” or “prayer doesn’t work”. Some questions you might then ask yourself is, does prayer work? Should we even bother to pray? Is it a waste of time? All great questions, but an even better question for a Christian to ask is, do I even know how to pray? You may think you know the answer to that, but maybe today we can discover what prayer truly is and why it matters, because at the end of the day the Bible is clear that prayer does work, now let’s dive into what prayer can look like in our lives.

The Point of Prayer: Keep Seeking

Before prayer can become a rhythm it has to be grounded in a relationship. The point of prayer is not to begin with what can I ask of God or what’s in it for me. The point of prayer is seeking God for who He is, not for what He can give you.

When we seek we seek through acknowledging who God is and being thankful for what he’s done. From this place your heart will begin to change, which is the greatest part of prayer. That we change in the process.

The Discipline of Prayer: Keep Knocking

As we know prayer is not a quick fix solution to life’s problems, because God is not a divine vending machine that gives us what we want when we want it. The discipline of prayer is only possible through faith. It’s believing that even if you don’t feel anything or see anything changing you’ll still show up and talk with God and believe.

This discipline makes your response to bad news, anxiety, and the trials of life focused on trusting Jesus rather than taking these things and giving them a home in your head. The rhythm of release through knocking on the doors of heaven allows for the pain of your problems to be placed on God rather than on your shoulders.

The Access of Prayer: Keep Asking

Once you have sought God and have made your rhythm to seek him. Then you'll find your heart will have the confidence to believe and ask for what God would desire for you. God will always direct our prayers to a need. Whether that's the need you have or the need someone else has. If we align our Ask to God's desire to bless, make whole, and redeem then we will see the miracles our hearts truly desire to see.

CONCLUSION

As you can see prayer has more to do with how God is changing us than anything else. More often than not the prayers we offer during tragedies convicts our heart into action. Making us the miracle we're asking God for. Calling us to build a fire in our hearts to do what He is calling us to do. God also makes prayer the place where we can know Him, His heart, and His will. It's the place where we are reminded that He has all power and control. Where we can lay burdens, anxiety, and fear. Where we can know that He is for us and that we can come to him with any request. So keep seeking, keep knocking, and keep asking.

Bgroup Questions

1. What are some reasons you pray? Do you pray? How often do you pray?
2. Do you think prayer works? Why or why not?
3. When and where do you want to start praying? Why?

TAKE ACTION: Write down a plan for prayer. Write down where you want to pray and what time you want to start praying. Share this with your small group leader and a friend.

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