

What is Prayer

LifeGroup Lesson

October 1, 2017

Matthew 6:5-15

OPENING PRAYER:

When we gather each week, we don't want to become so caught up in our own agendas that we miss you. We don't want to pray and discuss and read your word just to check those things off our to-do list. We want to meet with you, Jesus. We want to hear from you, to experience you, to walk away from this place changed because we have been in your presence. So, take this gathering, and make it yours. We are so thankful that you are here with us. Amen.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- What did you agree/disagree with the LifeTalk this week?
- Where do you go when you need to pray? Has there been a place in your life that is particularly spiritual/induces prayer?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Matthew 6:5-15

- What jumps out at you in this scripture?
- What do you find yourself praying for most often?
- In praying, what do you find is your biggest challenge?
- In getting serious about your spiritual life, what is something you need to start doing?
- Meditate further on what prayer is and its effects on your life. What might keep us from an active prayer life? What does an active prayer life look like? Make a list of these things and think of ways to be strategic in keeping a consistent prayer life.

Spend time reading and discussing the following quotes on prayer:

- *"Prayer is communion with God. It is a matter of taking connections with the One who stands at the center of life and joy, and learning to live with those connections all the time."* – John Killinger in *Beginning Prayer*
- *"True, whole prayer is nothing but love."* – St. Augustine
- *"The key to the ... heart of God is prayer."* – Richard Foster in *Prayer*
- *"Prayer does not change God, but it changes him [or her] who prays."* – Soren Kierkegaard
- *"The great thing is prayer. Prayer itself. If you want a life of prayer, the way to get it is by praying... You start where you are and you deepen what you already have."* – Thomas Merton
 - Which quotes speak to you? Any with which you disagree? Discuss with the group the different quotes.

NEXT STEPS:

- How will your life be different based upon what you have learned in this week's scripture, lesson and/or LifeTalk?
- Consider one of the following to increase your prayer life:
 - Scripture – use the Bible to prepare yourself for prayer. Bible reading can clarify, prepare us or offer insight to our prayers.
 - Use the prayers of others – purchase a book of prayers or use the internet to find prayers of other Christians.
 - Write your own prayers or keep a journal of what you are praying for.
 - The scriptures often use athletic training as a metaphor for the spiritual life. Train your prayer life with consistent prayer time and routine.
 - Allow your mind to wander – sit with God and give yourself permission to wander. Use that wandering and lift it in prayer.
- Set aside time each day to pray. If you've had an active prayer life for a number of years, then consider setting aside more time than usual this week. If you're just starting out begin with a few minutes each day. Consider keeping a journal about your experiences and what is going on in your heart throughout the week as you pray.
- Think of any questions that you have about prayer and bring them to the group next week.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

O Lord, let nothing divert our advance toward you, but in this dangerous labyrinth of the world and the whole course of our pilgrimage here, may your heavenly dictates be our map and your holy life be our guide. (John Wesley)