

## **Digging Deeper**

### **Small Group and Bible Study Notes for November 22, 2009**

#### **Getting to Know You:**

1. Do you think anyone really ever prays enough? What has led you to answer like you have?
2. When is the best time for you to pray?
3. When you pray, what is the most consistent topic of your prayers?

#### **Getting to Know the Scriptures**

1. Psalm 42: 1-2 depicts a man desperate for time with God. I wonder, have we ever felt desperate for God?
2. The last part of verse 2 talks about meeting with God. If you could have a meeting with God, what would you talk about? Would you ask for something? What?
3. Psalm 51 offers us some suggestions of things to talk with God about. What things can you pull from this passage?
4. Take a look at “The Lord’s Prayer” in Matthew 6: 9-13. What things does Jesus teach us to pray?
5. Do you think our prayers sound more like “to do” lists for God? Do we order Him around in our prayers? Do you think this makes sense?
6. It is significant that in the Lord’s prayer, Jesus urges us to pray, “...Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” I believe, that Jesus is reminding us that the real purpose of our prayers is not the “...give us this day...” part, but rather the “...Your Kingdom Come...” part. The mission of God is the most important thing of all to God. His mission? To have a relationship with his crowning creation—and we are his crowning creation.
7. Do our prayers regularly ask that God’s mission take place through us?
8. What would a prayer like this require of us?
9. Are you ready to pray a prayer like that?

#### **Some Practical Suggestions**

1. Stop right now and think before you speak in prayer. Ask yourself, “Based on what I know of the Bible, what is important to God?” When you have answered that question, begin to talk to God about those things. Note: in my study, I have discovered a few things: Praise, Thanksgiving, Confession, Blessing to do God’s work, Leadership to do God’s work, Resources to do God’s work, etc...
2. Listen. When you get ready to pray, what if you just prayed, “Lord, speak to me now, I’m listening.” (I Samuel 3:10) As things come to your mind, pray about them remembering to do more than just ask God for stuff.
3. This will take some effort, but what if you spent an entire season of prayer simply saying “Thank you” to God. Don’t ask for anything.
4. Finally, join hands with those around you and simply ask God to teach you to pray. He will if you’ll stay with it.

## Prayer as Mission

Psalm 32: 6—8

One of the places that we've missed the bus the most is in the area of prayer

Does anyone really pray enough?

Can we do anything other than just heap guilt upon ourselves? I sure hope so.

Our "Daddy" has something to teach us and the key to it is right under our noses...\_\_\_\_\_.

- I. Heavenly \_\_\_\_\_ vs. Anvil
  - a. From the time we learned, "Now I lay me down..."
  - b. We've learned to basically order God around like he works for us
  - c. We make "\_\_\_\_\_" of sorts, send them heavenward, and then complain when the shipment is late.
  - d. Caveat: God is a God of grace, he does know our hearts, he understands what it's like to be us, but this is simply not the teachings of our scriptures.
  - e. Scriptural prayer is primarily about the \_\_\_\_\_ of who God is and the formation of \_\_\_\_\_ in me.
  - f. Psalm 42, Psalm 51
  - g. Rather than ordering God to do for me, scriptural prayer is about my character being formed into the \_\_\_\_\_ of His.
  - h. What would happen if we concentrated less on heavenly requisitions and more on crawling up on the anvil?
  
- II. Functional \_\_\_\_\_ vs. Fire from Heaven
  - a. We live like there is a \_\_\_\_\_ answer for every problem
  - b. Nothing wrong with human wisdom, but the Bible simply doesn't begin in this place.
  - c. Psalm 56 "...when I am afraid...", (Mark 6: 30ff.) Feeding 5,000, Elijah( I Kings 18: 36—38)
  - d. What will you do when life teaches you that for some things there simply isn't an answer?
  - e. The scriptural assumption is prayer, its not an option, it's like breathing in and out.
  - f. What would happen if we did less human answers and more asking God for his help
  
- III. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. The Mission
  - a. "I prayed once and it didn't work, so...I quit."
  - b. We are not the most important thing in God's world...\_\_\_\_\_ is!
  - c. And God always blesses his mission!
  - d. We talk to God all the time about what's important to us, but what's \_\_\_\_\_ to him?
  - e. If you study prayer in the scriptures, you can know.
  - f. God is all about His Mission, What is It? Living in \_\_\_\_\_ with His People!
  - g. The mission of God has always been to live in right relationship with his people
    - i. Garden of Eden, Israel, Jesus Christ, Eternity
  - h. The prayers of the Bible orbit around the Mission of God

- i. \_\_\_\_\_ in I Samuel 1,2 (to make her happy? No. The Mission of a People)
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_ in the Psalms praying for deliverance and blessing (To give him ease? No. to preserve a people for God)
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_ praying for the healing of others (To ease their suffering? No. Evidence of Who He Was)
- iv. Paul praying for opportunities to visit his churches (so he can be pampered? No. most of the time he suffered.) The Mission mattered most!

- i. The most important thing to God is his mission and he always blesses his mission!
- j. I should pray about everything, The scriptures clearly teach this. (Philippians 4:6)
- k. But as my prayers fulfill the mission of God, they are blessed by God. If in the course of his mission I have ease, then good. If in the course of his mission I have suffering, so be it, but the most important thing to God is not my happiness, it's his mission!