

Call to Prayer

Small-Group Materials
Week of April 1st, 2007

For Small-Group Leaders

Dear Leaders,

I have long been intrigued by Jesus' pray life. Some time ago I concluded that Jesus must have known something about prayer that I have yet to learn. I don't get it like he did. If I did, my prayer habits would be different. Jesus had very strange prayer habits. Rod Sargent explains:

"Sensing a personal need with regards to my own prayer life prompted me to begin a study of prayer in Luke's gospel. The first observation that seemed to stick in my mind like a piece of lint on a blue serge suit was the supreme importance of prayer to Jesus. To him, prayer was indispensable. It held the highest of priorities. I see his example and am astonished by it. In Luke 5:15-16 (Phillips) we read: "Enormous crowds collected to hear Jesus and to be healed of their diseases, but he slipped quietly away to a deserted place for prayer." These people needed to hear the Word of God, and Jesus was capable of proclaiming it with unparalleled power and authority. Others in that crowd needed to be healed. Some were blind, others deaf, some crippled and many were diseased. Jesus had the power to heal them. He did neither. One minute He was there. The next minute, someone was asking, "Where's Jesus?" ...Astonishing! An enormous crowd waiting to hear and to be healed, and Jesus leaves them to go and pray."

This week as we approach Easter and continue our *Call to Prayer*, we explore the prayer life of Jesus. Fasten your seatbelts and be ready to be challenged by the Savior's prayers.

Praying with you,

Scott

These small group-materials will be available at www.fbcdavis.org throughout the *Call to Prayer*.

Getting Started (to get group discussion going):

- **Squeezed** – What priorities or pressures tend to squeeze prayer out of your life?
- **Jesus and Prayer**- Read Rod Sargent's quote above.

Discussion Questions:

1. Please read Mark 1:35, Luke 5:15-16, and Luke 6:12.
2. How would you describe Jesus' prayer life.
3. What sorts of things did Jesus say "no" to in order to say "yes" to prayer? What do you think about the fact that Jesus said "no" to some very good things in order to pray?
4. Why do you suppose Jesus made this difficult decision at times to slip away from pressing needs in order to pray?
5. What kind of place did Jesus go to in order to speak with his Father?
6. Have you designated a specific time and place to pray? If so, what has worked well for you?
7. Read John 5:19-20, 30. What kind of relationship did Jesus have with the Father? How did this impact his prayer life?
8. On the cross, we get a glimpse of how dependent Jesus was upon his relationship with the Father. Read Mark 15:33-34. What does this prayer teach us about Jesus' relationship with the Father?

Making it Personal:

1. What did Jesus know about prayer that we don't yet fully understand? In other words, what convictions did Jesus have towards prayer that we lack?
2. What do we need to know about our relationship with the Father if we are to pray more like Jesus?

Conversational Prayer (consider reading this to your group before the group prayer time):

Praying together as a group is something we grow into. Prayer can be a vital part of the Home Group experience, but often we find that people are intimidated and somewhat hesitant to pray aloud for one another. Here are some basic principles that may help your group's conversational prayer. (over)

Start praying rather than sharing requests. Much valuable prayer time can be taken up with sharing requests. At times it is wise to simply move into prayer and allow each person who has a request to initiate prayer for that concern. On the other hand, there are occasions when it is appropriate to take time to share with each other. Remember that God is also in the sharing time. It is wise to balance the two approaches.

Pray about one topic at a time. We tend to give God our grocery list of what we need. Sometimes our group prayer can be helped by praying around one topic at a time. Think about it in terms of speaking to someone you know. If everyone in your group chose to speak about whatever was on his or her mind and in random order, the listener would become confused. If then, someone in your group prays exactly what you were going to pray, don't feel you have to think about something else to pray about. There are times when the Holy Spirit will prompt us to pray for the same thing, maybe even praying the same words. While others are praying, try not to think about what you are going to say next, but rather listen to what is being prayed for. It will keep everyone focused on that particular subject. The Holy Spirit will prompt you when to pray.

Pray Briefly. Sometimes for new Christians or those not accustomed to praying aloud, group prayer can be intimidating. To help overcome these fears have the group limit their prayers to one or two sentences at a time while keeping within the topic. This may be more difficult for experienced prayers than for beginners. However, you will experience another level of prayer that everyone will participate in.

Pray spontaneously, not in sequence. Try not to elect people to pray or to go around the room from person to person, rather allow the Holy Spirit to lead and motivate people randomly. Oftentimes, everyone will know when the prayer time is finished - there will be a sense of completeness.