

PRAYER LIFE OF A SMALL GROUP

BY: STEVE SCHOPPERS

Recently, my small group was looking for a change of pace to our weekly Bible study. I suggested an interview on prayer that I was working on for the Christian Writers Group. What follows is a discussion on the prayer life of a small group.

How important is prayer in your life?

“It is our lifeline to Christ. Prayer makes our relationship between God and ourselves so much closer. It is a very important way to acknowledge God as well as a way to share our concerns and requests that we have in our everyday lives. Prayer is also one of the best ways we know of to share our praises, thoughts of thanksgiving and the feelings of being blessed by God every day.”

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

How did prayer become important in your life?

“Prayer became important by following the example of our spiritual leaders and contemporaries. People such as our pastors, our parents, and our friends from youth groups have all helped to form our spiritual lives by praying with and for us. As we have matured in our lives, many of us have found that adverse situations in life lead us into prayer more and more as we realize that the situation is too much to handle without intervention from God.”

How often do you pray?

“Prayer is sometimes looked at as a running conversation with God. We find ourselves saying small prayers throughout the day asking God for guidance and thanking him for blessings. One interesting observation among our small group was that we probably don’t spend enough time in prayer.”

“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” (Psalm 55:22)

Have you ever felt like God was not listening because your prayers were not answered as you expected?

“Many times we feel as if God isn’t listening. God answers our prayers according to his will and not according to our desires. God has a much broader view of the future and knows what is best for his children.”

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

What is your response to prayers answered according to God's will and not to your desires?

"Thank you Lord. I don't understand, but I trust you and know you are watching out for my best interest."

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet water, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23)

Are there such things as unanswered prayers and why do you feel this way?

"After much discussion on this question we came to the conclusion that *YES there are...no there are not unanswered...well, maybe*. Some prayers seem unanswered because we didn't get the answer that we were expecting. Maybe it comes down to a motive and praying for the wrong reasons that a prayer goes unanswered. God answers yes, no and maybe later."

"When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with the wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." (James 4:3)

Do you have a set format to your prayers?

"While there is not set format to all of our prayers, everybody tries to start with praise and thankfulness for the blessings that God gives to each of us. Prayer concerns for family, friends, church and community also have a place in our prayers."

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, you will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:9-13)

How local or global are your prayers?

"Our prayers are more local than global, but it depends on the situation. When praying alone, our prayers are very local, for family and friends. As we gather in our small groups and at church, our prayers become more global for such things as missions, troops serving our country and the economy."

If there was no such thing as prayer, do you think you would be able to communicate with God? How?

“The consensus among our small group was that we would be able to communicate with God through other forms of worship such as scripture or song. However, the relationship with God would not seem as close as it is when we are able to pour out our hearts to God and know that He is listening and responding to us through prayer.”

“I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.” (Psalm 69:30)

I would like to thank my small group for their time and honesty in answering my questions for this interview on prayer. They gave me insights into spiritual growth through prayer that I would not have had without them.

--Steve Schoppers

SMALL GROUP:

Barry & Laura Back
Curt & Judy Nelson
Don Myran

