



FIVE GREAT PRAYERS FOR LENT

WHAT TO EXPECT

St. Augustine wrote, "true, whole prayer is nothing but love." Why then do so many people neglect to pray? Have we misunderstood the purpose of prayer? Are we unsure what to do when we pray? (I think of Ricky Bobby saying "I'm not sure what to do with my hands.") If only we entered into prayer in the way God desires, we might find our own experience in agreement with St. Augustine.

Throughout the season of Lent (March 2-April 14), we are called to deepen our prayer life. For some, this may mean beginning a habit of daily prayer, setting aside time each day to share our hopes, joys, fears, and frustrations with God. For others, this may mean exploring new prayer practices or devoting yourself to a particular subject that the Lord leads you to pray for.

Join us on Sunday mornings and in Life Group for a series of studies on biblical prayers that are faithful for us to follow in our own prayer lives.



WHAT IS COMING UP?

Women's Ministry:

- Women's Brunch
- Play Dates for Moms with Preschoolers
- New Women's Mid-Week Bible Study - Encountering God

Men's Ministry:

- Thursday Night Study - The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

ANSWER AS A GROUP

Opening Questions

1) How would you define "powerful prayer?" Have you witnessed/heard someone who prays powerful prayers? Do you consider your prayers to be powerful? Why or why not?

2) Consider moments of joy in your life. Is your first reaction to praise God and pray? Or does your mind go elsewhere in those moments? Why is that? Now consider moments/situations of pain, frustration, or that are less than ideal. Compare how you approach prayer during those difficult days? What thoughts, feelings, and even physical postures change between praying during joyful times compared to difficult times? Why is it helpful to compare and contrast these types of prayers and postures?

After Reading Daniel 9:1-27

3) What stood out to you in Daniel's prayer? Why is that? What makes Daniel's prayer so powerful?

4) Pastor Kevin highlighted four cornerstones (or points) to Daniel's prayer. What are those four cornerstones?

(*God's Word, Confession, God's Past Works, and God's Glory*).

Do you use any of these cornerstones in your prayers? If so, which one(s)? Are there certain one(s) you avoid? Why is that?

Do these elements help you structure your prayers? Why or why not?

5) One commentator stated "*Daniel did not regard prayer as unnecessary in view of the certainty of the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. He viewed prayer properly, as one means that God uses to accomplish His will in human history. Through prayer we become partners with God in bringing His will to pass in the world. Daniel's behavior, as well as his words, expressed the genuineness of his contrition.*" In light of Daniel's prayer in chapter 9, do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Now consider your prayers, do you often express genuine contrition? Why or why not?

6) What confession does Daniel make to God (vv 4-10)? Daniel highlights both sins of commission and omission in verses 5-6. What are those sins? Do you pray often confessing your sin, along with confessing the sins of others in your life (in a humble and communal way, not accusing them of sin)?

Challenge

7) Whether as an individual or a group, commit to praying every day for one week by using the formula that Daniel prayed in chapter 9. Each day for one week, pray God's word, pray confessing your sins and the sins of God's people, pray reminding God of His past work, and pray for God's glory to be revealed.



SCRIPTURE

For this week's curriculum, read Daniel 9:1-27. As you read and discuss Daniel's prayer, consult available study material such as Blue Letter Bible for any needed assistance.



CONTEXT

According to Chuck Swindoll, "The Babylonians exiled the group containing Daniel and his three friends—best known by their Babylonian names, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego—to the cultural center of the their empire, the city of Babylon, in 605 BC. This move was part of the first of three deportations (605, 597, and 586 BC) carried out by the Babylonians in Israel after they subdued Jerusalem and the unfaithful King Jehoiakim... Daniel found himself in the midst of a strongly polytheistic religious culture, meaning he had ample opportunities to fall into error. However, he stood firm in his faith among the Babylonian people on several significant matters—including dietary regulations and worship practices."