

Effective Prayer – Winter 2010
Root Group Questions

Paul's Prayer - Ephesians 1:15-23 & 3:14-21

1. What fuels the passion in your prayer cf; St Paul? (Eph 1:16)
2. What has helped you to maintain persistence in prayer? (Eph 1:17 & Lk 18:1-8)
3. How might you adapt your prayers in light of Eph 1&3 to seek heavenly gifts?
4. Just how big is your vision of God? (Eph 3:20-21)

The Church's Prayer - Acts 12:1-19

1. How might we consciously seek God's power in the everyday challenges of life? (Acts 12:1-19)
2. Thomas Buxton said: 'You know the value of prayer; it is precious beyond all price. Never never neglect it' How can we help each other not neglect it?
3. Faith is making a decision to trust God, how much do you trust him? (Heb 11)
4. In your prayers are you primarily seeking personal answers or God's glory? (think carefully about this)

Stephen's Prayer - Acts 7:54-8:1

1. The bible encourages Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). In what ways do you sense the the Spirit at work in your life? When was the last time you asked God to fill you with his Spirit?
2. Stephen was able to face his martyrdom because he had a vision of Jesus. Col 3:1-2 tell us to set our hearts on things that are above, on Christ and on his coming kingdom. In what ways do you daily refresh your vision of God and re-orientate your heart?
3. Stephen's prayer as he was being stoned echoes the words of Jesus on the cross. Under pressure do you sweat, swear and worry, or pray for your enemies?

Easter Day - Luke 24:1-12

1. How would you describe the resurrection to a non-Christian friend?
2. Hope in the resurrection of the dead is not the same as hope in heaven. What is the difference and why does it matter?
3. Paul in 1 Cor 15:17 says "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins." What does he mean? (Cf Rom 6:1-14)
4. Paul also says we have been raised with Christ. What difference does that make to our lives as disciples of Jesus (Colossian 3:1-17)

Palm Sunday - Luke 19:29-44

1. Jesus risked everything when he set out towards Jerusalem in . In this passage he sent on ahead some of his disciples to prepare for his entry into Jerusalem (v29-36). In obedience these disciples were willing to risk their own lives for Jesus as they collected the colt. In what ways have you stepped out in faith or taken a risk for the Lord? Andy challenged us in his sermon: "If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"
2. When it comes to putting you faith in Jesus - where do you find it easiest to trust him?
3. Prayer and worship grow most naturally where there is faith – have you a testimony of this?
4. Creation praises God and when we do too, we are in harmony with his new creation how might we become more aware of this context of faith?

David's Prayer - 2 Samuel 6:1-23

1. The ark of the covenant is the symbol of God's tangible presence. Have you experienced the tangible presence of God? How did you respond? Is God's tangible presence something you are hungry for and passionate about?
2. In v5 David celebrates with all his might using a variety of instruments. The bible summons us to worship God using our bodies by clapping, singing, dancing, shouting and raising our hands. Are there any physical expressions you've never displayed in worship. Why is that?
3. Are you tempted to take God's presence for granted like Uzzah, or does religious passion embarrass you as it did Michal? How might we overcome these temptations so that we can be released into passionate worship?

Hannah's Prayer - 1 Samuel 1:1-18

1. In the passage, Hannah pours her heart out to God after years of suffering in silence as she bottled up her feelings. The writer suggests that the other characters, wittingly or unwittingly also hindered her prayers. Peninnah manipulates her, Elkanah distracts her, Eli misunderstands her. What stops you being open and honest when you pray?
2. When is it easy to trust God and when is it difficult? How is God teaching you to trust him more?
3. Hannah appeals to God's faithfulness. (v11) Which promises from the Bible do you need to hear at the moment? Memorise them and put them on your fridge. One of the promises should relate to your answer to question 2.

Jacob's Prayer - Genesis 32:22-32

1. Walter Wink describes biblical prayer as "impertinent, persistent, shameless, indecorous. It is more like haggling in an outdoor bazaar than the polite monologues of the church." Can you think of any examples from the Old Testament that support this view? How would you describe your own prayers?
2. In this passage, Jacob wrestles God to a standstill. Do you think you can get God in a headlock and extract a blessing from him? If not, what is going on in this passage?
3. Even when Jacob's hip is dislocated he clings on, desperate for a blessing. Share a time you have clung on to God through persistent prayer. What did you learn about God and about yourself?
4. When do you fight back and wrestle with God? Are there area of your life where God needs to break you, where he needs to 'dislocate your hip'?

Daniel's Prayer - Daniel 9:1-19

1. If you are honest with yourself, what really prevents you from developing the patterns of personal prayer you would like?
2. How could your root group help you win the battle for your heart so that it more naturally turns towards God in prayer
3. In chapter 9 Daniel prayed as he felt the tension between his reading of the prophet Jeremiah and the reality of the world around him. In your current reading of Scripture where are the tension points with what you see in the world? When will you pray into them next?
4. Have you read the Rector's Grove booklet 'Three Holy Habits' It addresses some of these issues in greater depth and has some great exercises too.