

Does Prayer Really Make a Difference?

Date: 4/10/16

Read Together

Read the Scripture and overview below before your Life Group meets.

Scripture passage: Acts 12

What is prayer? Is it a wish, a dream, or a ritual? Does it really matter if we pray? Many Christians believe that we should pray, but do we truly believe that something powerful happens when we do so? The struggles and demands of life push us to discern what we honestly believe about ourselves and about God and His relationship with us. We either live striving to make things better on ourselves, or we come to the end of ourselves and discover and understand the power of God for us. In the first portion of Acts 12, we will see this reality played out in the lives of believers within the Church when a terrible crisis unfolded. They rallied together in prayer, and in doing so, they witnessed the power of God.

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your lesson to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise** God as your all-powerful, ever-faithful Father.
- **Repent** from any doubt or unbelief.
- **Ask** the Holy Spirit to help you surrender your troubles to the Lord.
- **Yield** to the Spirit and trust God to guide and help you through your difficulties.

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful

- What is your view on prayer? Is it a ritual for you? When you pray, do you “hope” God answers or do you know that God hears and responds?
- Do you view prayer as a chance to change God’s mind or an opportunity to draw closer to Him so He can invoke change in you?

Read Acts 12:1-5

- Discuss the crisis that unfolded in this portion of Acts 12.
- This was a horrific blow to the Church, but they immediately turned to God in prayer. They did not understand the “why” to the events that were unfolding, but they had learned that God sustains His people in all circumstances. Read and discuss these prayer promises that can help you in times of trouble:
 - 2 Corinthians 1:10, 9:8
 - Philippians 4:6-8
 - Colossians 1:13
 - Hebrews 4:13-16, 6:19-20
 - 1 Peter 5:6-9



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- Reread Acts 12:5. Here we see that believers partnered together in prayer. Prayer is personal but there is power and blessing in praying with and for others. When have you been encouraged, challenged, or seen personal growth from praying with other believers?
- Do you make praying with others a regular part of your week? Why or why not?
- For the next four weeks our church is engaging in “Go There Prayer.” Will you commit to participate in this prayer emphasis with members of your Life Group on Wednesday nights so you can grow in this area?

Read Acts 12:6-19

- Discuss the miraculous events that occurred in this passage and then reflect on the truths below.
 - Prayer delivers peace even when life gives cause for panic.
 - Describe a time when, in the midst of chaos, you felt an unexplainable peace and managed the everyday tasks of life during difficult circumstances. To what do you attribute this peace?
 - How could you use this experience to share the power of Christ at work in your life with someone?
 - Prayer reminds us that what is impossible with man, is possible with God.
 - Describe a time when this statement has been true in your life circumstance.
 - When God provides answers to your prayers, do you recognize or question them?

Read Acts 12:20-25

- Describe the events that occurred leading up to Herod’s death.
- Pastor McKinley reminded us in his message that prayer encourages believers to live in light of who God is and not who or where others are. How does this statement help us as we live in our sinful world today? (See also Psalm 73 as a reminder of the power of God.)
- Verse 24 gives us much hope. What does Acts 12:24 remind us of? In light of such chaos and crisis, what does this tell you about God and His character?
- Prayer helps us remain focused on the mission of God in the midst of a world filled with danger and distraction. Who do you know that needs to see the work of Almighty God in their life? Will you pray with or for them this week?

Do Life Together

These questions are meant to encourage you to apply spiritual truth and live on mission for Jesus. It is your Life Group leader’s responsibility to challenge you and hold you accountable to taking steps of growth and faith. Take these questions to heart. Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt you to grow in your role as a disciple and ultimately, a disciple-maker.

Who will you commit to pray for over the next four weeks during *Go There Prayer*? Who will you invite to come with you on Wednesday evenings for this prayer emphasis? Will you boldly *Go There in Prayer*, asking God to work in the heart of this person over these weeks so they can know Him personally?



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