



## Week Six

### Opening Prayer

God thank you for our time together. Help us to see you at work in our lives even when things aren't as we wished. Be with us as we discuss your presence in the midst of our prayers. Amen.

### Talk It Over

This week we wrapped up our series called 40 Days of Prayer. The goal of this series was to help us grow in our connection with God and to grow in our understanding of God's power through prayer. The hope was this series could help us find something fresh in our relationship and approach to God. This week we covered the difficult topic of what is happening when God appears to not answer our prayers.

- Tell us a light or funny story about a prayer you prayed that you are glad God didn't answer the way you wished he would at the time
- On a more serious note tell of a time you were brought into a desperate prayer and what that was like for you.

### Read James 5:16; Mark 11:24-25

One of the things we should always consider in prayer is ourselves. We can be great and we can be wrong. Processing out loud with a trusted person or group allows us to see things we normally wouldn't when we try and figure them out on our own. This is not to say that our behavior or process prevents God's presence. He is always with us but our behavior may be hindering our growth and freedom.

- Describe a good experience of letting someone into the details of what was happening in your life.
- Describe a time where confessing something you did or felt did not go well? What did you learn from that experience?
- Can you pretty quickly name your fear when it comes to prayer? Are you aware of your tendencies or patterns? What do you do when you notice them?

### Read James 1:6-7; Matthew 9:29-30

Faith is a huge component in our prayer life. God looks upon the heart and while he sees your desire, wounds, and needs, he also is looking at how you see him. What do you believe God can do for you? How we pray speaks to how we believe.

- Tell of a time your faith felt small but you still saw God move in your life.
- How would you describe faith? What does it look like for your faith to be active in your prayer?
- Who in your life seems to have strong faith? What does that look like in their life?

### Read 1 John 5:14-15; Luke 22: 42-43

It's important that we express our own desires to God. He cares and he wants to hear them, but we also need to keep in mind we do not have the whole picture. There is mystery to the will of God and we are called into trusting that God will use whatever life brings for his good. This is a huge (and not easy) act of



surrender. We all can identify with Jesus asking God to take his cup from him, to desire something different than our current reality.

- Can you think of a tragic time where God used the circumstance to bring about some good?
- Can you feel grief, loss, and peace at the same time? What is that like?
- When was the last time you expressed your deepest desire to God about a situation? How did that make you feel?
- When have you surrendered your desire and how did God meet you in the midst of that?

**Reflect on this quote by CS Lewis** *I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time- waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God- it changes me.*

- How have you been changed by God?
- How has prayer changed you?

### **Closing Prayer**

*If your growth group has been participating in praying as a group consider adding an extended time for that as we close this series. When everyone who wants to has had a chance to pray, go ahead and close with the prayer below or your own prayer.*

God, help us to understand you are for us. That we can come to you with small things and big things. Continue to prompt us in prayer and cover us with your loving presence. Amen.

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### **How To Use this Discussion Guide**

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.

