

Facilitator Sourcing Scripture Text: James 5:13-20 (5 min)

Jog your memory and warm your hearts by reading the following passage looking for themes of Prayer, Engagement, Pride and Unbelief.

James 5:13-20 ¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. ¹⁹ My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰ let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Facilitator Themes or Emphasis

- Prayer – As Conversation and Engagement both with God and our Neighbor
- Heart Issues – Pride and Unbelief

1. Get Acquainted: Icebreaker (10 min)

Read all the questions but let each person pick just one to share with the group.

- What is the most fun time you have had praying?
- What is your longest standing prayer request that has been answered?
- What is worth praying for 3 1/2 years?
- How much work or energy are you asking God to do to make your prayer requests happen?
- What prayers have you stopped praying even though they have not been answered?

2. Worship: Worship God for Inventing – Words and Prayer (10 min)

God is so cool. Sight connects us with creation. Words connect us to people, their hearts and ours. Worship God the brilliance in His inventions of seeing, hearing, and speaking. Then after giving us the tools to engage He invites, commends and commands us to engage with Him, Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit and with our neighbor in confession and love.

Read the following passages. Pause after each set of verses to worship God for His wondrous works in His Creation.

Luke 11:2 And he said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation...”

Luke 11:9–13 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Revelation 5:11-14 ¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth
and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and
might forever and ever!”

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

3. Kingdom Centered Prayer: (10 min)

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD for His willingness to listen to you. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that, in Christ, He hears us – receiving our praise, welcoming our confession, and answering our cries for help.
2. How (*or in what circumstances*) are you practically prayerless? Confess your pride and unbelief to Jesus, asking Him to save you here also – that He would *forgive you and work a growing confidence in Him into your heart.*
3. Give thanks to Jesus for His work to “bring sinners back” making it possible for you to be God’s adopted child! *Thank Him that rather than staying remote and uninvolved, that He engaged in the work and fight so that we could be saved.*
4. Who do you know that is in need, whether a co-worker, neighbor, or friend? Ask the Father to hear you on their behalf, and to work in their life to give them His joy and Presence.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you His fruit of love and goodness. Read again Luke 11:1-13 and pray that the Spirit to help you trust the access you’re given in Christ and to pray as you should.

4. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

Title: Faithful Character In Crisis: Prayers of Faith, Teacher: Tim Rice

Intro: Prayer is hard. How is your prayer life? Vs What are your conversations with God like?

How did things go wrong? Prayer malfunctions in suffering – internal / external

Pride and Unbelief - Keep us from praying.

Examples: Ice Cream scoop, Hole dug for a basement, Grand Canyon

Pride – Self-Reliant

Unbelief – Self-Pity

I am sufficient.

I don't want God.

I don't need God.

I suspect God.

Prayer is the antidote to both – Pride and Unbelief

Q. How does prayer cut the heart out of pride?

Q. How does prayer erode unbelief?

Jesus – Our Good Shepherd, engages our Heavenly Father and us

The wrath of God - “giving over”, His leaving us to ourselves,

Ghosting - to go silent on social media, To stop following someone

Engagement - to pursue,

Jesus leaves Heaven to enter earth to pursue us

Wander from the truth - Jesus pursues.

Love moves toward people - love chases the wanderer

Q. What does it feel like to be “ghosted”? How do you re-engage?

Q. When was a time that you felt “ghosted” by God? How do you re-engage?

Q. What do your conversations sound like?

Q. What does it mean to you that God promises to “never leave you or forsake you”?

Living Engaged – Awakened to Believing The Gospel – Becoming The Gospel

Engaged – as an act of romance, a love affair

Engaged – as work, Getting In The Fight

Prayer Engages us to Love God and to get in the fight for God.

Q. How could your conversations with God reflect more of both?

5. Mission: Prayer - Central To Our Mission (10 min)

Happy Thanksgiving and what a great week to pray first, pray last, pray all along the way.

- Pray for each person you will see each day, those expected and unexpected.
- Pray for family, friends and enemies you will get to spend time with this holiday season.
- Pray to engage – move toward others to share your heart and listen to theirs.
- Pray for famine and harvest –
 - Ask God to famine us so that we would know a deeper sense of dependence and he would break through our self-reliance.
 - Ask God for a rich harvest of souls to believe on Jesus, friends, family and enemies alike this holiday season so we might believe in His love and power to save.

6. Jesus From Others (5 min)

- What do you love more about Jesus from what someone shared during our CG tonight?