

IS ANYBODY UP THERE?
WEEK 3 DISCUSSION GUIDE
"FATHER & FRIENDS"

READ

This week we continued our series, "Is Anybody Up There," on prayer. We looked at one of the most famous prayers in the New Testament, as we focused on what prayer changes.

This time of prayer was right after Jesus celebrated the Passover with his closest followers. This Passover meal would come to be known as the Last Supper; it was the last time they would share a meal before Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Jesus had been preparing them for what was coming but they still failed to understand.

Mark 14:32-36

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Jesus calls out to God, pleading for Him to change the circumstances, to take away the impending torturous death on the cross He is about to face. But through this prayer we also see Jesus' surrender to God, "Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Mark 14:37-38

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Jesus knew what was coming, the heat was about to be turned up on the Jesus movement. He knew his friends would want to be strong but would be tempted to look for another way out, even if it was not the right way. Jesus told them to watch and pray, just as He was doing. He knew it would be difficult for them because it was difficult for Him.

Mark 14:39-41

Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting?..."

Three times Jesus goes out to pray for God to change the circumstances. Surrender is difficult, Jesus wants to do His father's will but it is difficult.

Mark 14:41-42

...Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

After praying all through the night what Jesus prayed about is here, circumstances did not change but Jesus did. Here he uses military commands that mean "forward march", the command to advance on an enemy. He marches ahead, willingly, into what He has been trying to avoid.

Surrender is at the heart of prayer. The real purpose of prayer is not ultimately about changing circumstances, it's about changing you. If you want to experience change in your life, make prayer a regular part of it.

DISCUSS

How do you respond to the idea that the real purpose of prayer is not about changing circumstances, it's about changing you?

Think about a time in your life when you prayed for God to change your circumstances but He changed your heart instead. What did that look like?

Why do you think we find surrender so difficult?

In the prayer we focused on this week, Jesus went out three times to pray for God to change this particular set of circumstances. Has your experience with surrender in prayer been similar or different? Why do you think this is?

Is there an area of your life that you have not yet surrendered to God in prayer? How do you think your life might look different if you surrendered this to God?

What has stood out to you most during this series? Has your prayer life changed as a result of this series?

PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP

Pray that prayer would be a regular part of our daily lives. Pray that God would bring to mind any areas of our lives that we have not yet surrendered to him, and that through time in prayer we would be able to say to God "your will, not mine" and mean it.

PRAY FOR FCC

Pray that our lives would look different as a result of prayer. Pray that through prayer we would be moving in God's direction, that our hearts would align with His will.

PRAY FOR OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS

Please pray for our FCCHB field worker Nilda Cruz. Pray for wisdom and continued guidance as she oversees a center that equips and cares for women and children through education and livelihood classes, children's activities, meal programs, and supporting various church plants among marginalized people groups. Pray for her continued health (at nearly 80 years old -Happy Birthday this Friday!) as she ministers to people in the name of Jesus in the Philippines. Please pray for her continued boldness to lead the center and for more workers to join her to continue to carry on the work that God called her to begin.