

Harvest

Evangelical Free Church

Praying Like Jesus
For Adult Bible Fellowships and Small Groups Meeting Feb. 14-20, 2010

Join us in being on mission with God!

OUR VISION

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

"How Leaders Pray"

John 17:6-19

Getting Started

After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.

It's a joy to listen to a fascinating conversation. You may be with friends or business associates and someone new joins the group who is fun to listen to. They may be experts in something that you value or know people you are curious about. Maybe they have been to places that interest you or had experiences you hope to enjoy in the future. In such cases, it is easy to eavesdrop and learn from this kind of interchange.

Q: Who do you particularly enjoy being in a conversation with? What is there about their attitude, personality, experiences, or knowledge that you find appealing?

Nobody in the history of the world spoke with God the way Jesus did. His conversations with the Father were marked by an intimacy, a reverence, an understanding, and a warmth that surpasses the kind of prayers that we put forth.

In John 17:6-12, we discover some things we expect and some surprises as we look into Jesus' prayer as a leader. He turns his attention to the men he is leading and loving, and speaks with the Father about them.

Q: Before we look at his words, jot down some of the things that you normally would expect to find in a Christian leader's conversation with God about those he or she is leading. What might be part of that dialogue?

Jesus prays for his disciples

Jesus begins this part of his prayer by recalling what he has deliberately done for the men who will carry on his legacy into the world.

1. What are some of the ways in which Jesus revealed the Father (verse 6) to the disciples? Name one or two of the moments that you think would have been the most memorable had you been there with them.



Luke 22:39-46

³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him.

⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” ⁴¹

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴

And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

{⁴⁴ Some early manuscripts do not have verses 43 and 44.} ⁴⁵ When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.

⁴⁶ “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”

Jesus declares in verse six that the Father gave the disciples to him. Two times he stresses that they were not recruited by him, but given by the Father.

2. How does the leader who realizes that God gives him people to lead or mentor treat them differently than the leader to believes that their followers somehow belong to them?

3. In verse 6 Jesus states in prayer that his followers obeyed the Father's word. What specific actions do you think he had in mind when he characterized the disciples this way?

4. In verses 7-8 Jesus celebrates that the disciples had come to recognize something special about his own teaching. What does he say the disciples came to realize?

We live in a time when an increasing number of people grow up doubting that the Bible is a book from God. Some point to the existence of other holy books (the Qur'an or Hindu Vedas or Book of Mormon) and suggest that the Bible is just another attempt to explain spiritual reality. Others question whether God—if he exists—would ever communicate in written form to men. Others wonder if such communication could be accurately preserved for 4,000 years without being infected by all kinds of human ideas.

5. From your own observation, what are the most common questions do people ask when they start to question the reliability of the Bible?

Remember that Jesus did not teach in a vacuum. His words were measured against the entire revelation of the Old Testament, as well as the interpretations of the Jewish scripture as recorded in the Talmud and other documents. His words were rejected whenever they seemed to contradict their understanding of the writings of the Old Testament

6. Jesus celebrates the fact that his disciples learned to trust in his words because they realized they came from the Father. (See verse 8.) What are some of the ways we can pray for growing confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible? What would answers to this prayer look like?

How Leaders Pray

7. In verse 9 Jesus returns to the confession that his followers really belong to the Father. How does that awareness change the way we pray for others in the body of Christ?

In verse 10 Jesus acknowledges that he has received glory through the disciples he has trained.

8. In what ways do we taste glory from those who follow Jesus through us?

Philippians 4:1 _____

3 John 4 _____

1 Thessalonians 2:19 _____

9. As Jesus prays as a leader, he is aware of something about his future that impacts his work with his disciples and his prayer for them. What is important for him to remember in the first part of verse 11?

10. If you knew that you would not be on earth in six months, how would you pray differently for those you are trying to influence most? Why?

11. Jesus is aware of the dangers that his followers face. What is the means he asks the Father to use to guard his followers in verses 11-12?

12. What are some issues in today's world where it is wise to pray for protection for those who are disciples in Christ that we want to see flourish?

13. As the disciples served and followed him following his departure, there was a specific quality he wanted them to cultivate. In verse 13 he wants this to be theirs in "full measure." What is this surprising quality? Why is it important that we pray for it to be abundant in those we influence for Christ?



Reaching Up and Reaching Out

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14. In following Christ, something radically changed for Christ’s followers. Describe the major change Jesus speaks of in verse 14.

15. What are some of the things we should be praying for those we lead and teach in light of the truth of verse 14?

In moments of stress, rejection, and discouragement, it is easy to want to be free from this world and its troubles and be transported to heaven. Elijah experienced moments like that. He said, “I have had enough, Lord. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” (See 1 Kings 19:4.)

16. Why is it important to pray for leaders after the pattern of John 17:15? Why do you suppose we often find ourselves praying for physical and financial issues more than along these lines?

Note that Jesus repeats the truth that his followers are not of this world any more than he is. (See verse 16.)

17. What is there about you as a believer that makes you someone who is not of this world? List some of the things about you that make you different—even “other-worldly”.

18. In verse 17 Jesus prays that the Father would sanctify the disciples. What does he say God uses as His means to do that?

19. Briefly describe how God might use His word in your life in an ordinary week to move forward in this process of sanctifying you.

When we lead or influence others, we often give them tasks to do or release them to engage in Bible study, evangelism, missions, service projects, acts of compassion, strategic planning, or the use of their gifts in a multitude of ways. Our desire is that those we lead use their gifts, personalities, and skills to transform lives and make a difference in the world. Jesus felt the same way about the disciples he trained and shared life with during the three years of his public earthly ministry

20. What does it mean to pray that God will send those we lead into the world?

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