

Let's Pray

Session Five: Effective Prayer

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Ice Breaker: Briefly tell the group what your favorite worship song or hymn is and why.

Ephesians 6:18 (NIV®)

Be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Prayers That Accomplish Much

James 5:16 (NASB®)

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

I. Authority Expressed in Prayer

Luke 4:14-15 (NIV®)

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

1. We learned that we can have an effective prayer. And if we can have an effective prayer, that means we can also have an ineffective prayer. What are the components of effective prayer?
2. How did Jesus' life change after the Holy Spirit came upon Him? How do our lives change when we learn to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit?

II. Yielded to Authority

READ ALOUD

Powerful prayers are not about convincing God to help us. The outcomes of our prayers change when we become more fully aligned with God's purposes. Yielding is seldom an easy response. However, it is easier to yield if we believe we are acknowledging a greater authority. From this perspective, prayer is about yielding so that the power of God can be made evident in our lives. Prayer is not about presenting an argument so compelling that God must cooperate.

Luke 7:6-9 (NIV®)

"Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel."

3. How did the Roman centurion—a Gentile, a soldier, and a man with authority—show humility?
4. In what areas do you have authority? Where do you yield authority?
5. We all want our own way, and submitting ourselves to God’s authority takes intentionality. Describe ways in which we can choose to yield to God’s authority in our daily lives.

III. Your God Perspective

2 Kings 2:23-25 (NIV®)

As [Elisha] was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at him. “Go on up, you baldhead!” they said. “Go on up, you baldhead!” He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. And he went on to Mount Carmel . . .

Hebrews 12:28-29 (NIV®)

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”

6. How we think about God has a tremendous effect on how we pray. How do you picture God when you pray? Do you consider him only a “cuddly teddy bear” or also “a consuming fire” and why?
7. In what ways have we diminished the power and authority of God?
8. How could knowing God as a consuming fire, a warrior, or the God of the armies change the way you pray?

IV. Not My Agenda

John 5:30 (NIV®)

“By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”

John 12:49 (NASB®)

“For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.”

9. Jesus’ messaging is consistent—His purpose was to do the will of God. If the focus of our prayer is not to get God to do our agenda, what should our purpose be? How does that change our prayer life?

Let's pray together!

Almighty God, turn to me and have mercy on me, as You always do to those who love Your name. Direct my footsteps according to Your Word; let no sin rule over me. Redeem me from the oppression of men, that I may obey Your precepts. May Your face shine upon Your servant and teach me Your decrees. Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for Your law is not obeyed. I come in humility to seek Your ways, amen.

(taken from Psalm 119)

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