

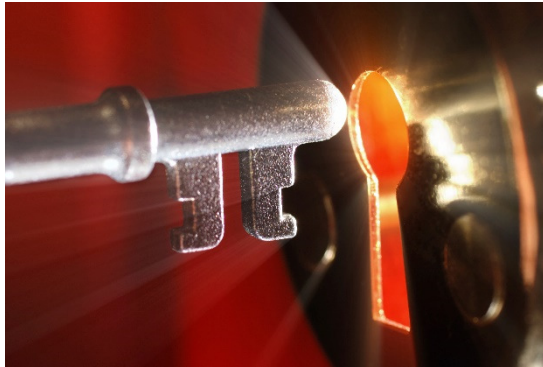


Summer of Prayer

How to Improve Your Prayer Life Week 2

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website (www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.

Keys to Effective Prayer



Read 1 John 5:13-17

This week is the second in our Summer of Prayer series 'How to Improve Your Prayer Life.' And there is always room for improvement even for the most powerful prayer warrior! The reality is that most of us struggle with prayer and we need encouragement, inspiration, motivation and instruction. This is because prayer is a powerful force able to change lives and situations and the effective Christian is the Christian who has discovered the secret to effective prayer. John wrote his first letter to give assurance and guidance to his readers – 'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may **know** you have eternal life' (5:13). In this passage, he then gives us some vital keys that will unlock the door of our prayer lives.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. Confidence v.14. Are you confident in approaching God in prayer? Read Matthew 27:45-53 and then Hebrews 10:19-22 and reflect on the imagery contained in these verses. On what (whom) is our confidence based? See Ephesians 2:23, 3:12 and Hebrews 4:16.
2. Hebrews 10:22 speaks of a guilty conscience. Do you think you might have an overly sensitive conscience? Do you ever feel burdened by a sense of guilt? John writes that we can have confidence before God even when our hearts wrongly condemn us - see 1 John 3:18-24.
3. Praying in the will of God v.14. The main key to effective prayer is praying according to God's will. Is it presumptuous for us to think we can know God's will on any matter? Should we always end our prayers with 'if it be your will'?
4. Seeking the will of God is a process we need to apply ourselves to because then we can pray according to it and be assured that God will not only hear and answer our prayer but that we can be certain we will receive what we have asked for – verse 15. This can be understood as a series of steps:-
 - i. Remember that God has a plan for everyone's life – Jeremiah 29:11; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 12:1,2.
 - ii. Lay any concerns before the Lord like Hezekiah did with the threatening letter (2 Kings 19:14). Read Acts 4:23-31.
 - iii. Wait on and for God patiently and prayerfully. Isaiah 30:18, 40:31; Psalm 27:14, 130:5, 40:1-3.
 - iv. Get God's view of things – Isaiah 55:8,9.
 - v. Listen to God – Isaiah 30:31, in stillness before him, Psalm 46:10.
 - vi. Be open and sensitive to the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13,14; Galatians 5:25).
 - vii. Ask God – Matthew 7:7-12.
5. Praying for Others – v.16. Assurance of answered prayer prompts a prayerful concern for others. We know God wills all people to receive eternal life (1 Tim 2:4). Who are you praying for that God will give them life?
6. Are there things we should not pray for – v.17? What is the sin that leads to death? How would you understand this verse? Read Romans 6:23 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-57.