



Summer of Prayer

How to Improve Your Prayer Life Week 6

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.

PRAYING IN STRENGTH



Read Philippians 4:4-13

This is the sixth and final study in our Summer of Prayer series 'How to Improve Your Prayer Life.' We have been looking at various Biblical passages in order to give our prayer lives a re-boot, a boost so that we receive motivation and inspiration to really pray and seek to be more effective in our praying. One of the most motivational and inspirational of Paul's letters is his letter to the church in Philippi. Philippi was an important city in Macedonia and a rather self-important Roman colony. Paul wrote to the church there while he was imprisoned in Rome in AD 61. Despite the hardship he was experiencing the main thrust of the letter is joy. He wrote to strengthen the Christians and to exhort them (unlike their fellow citizens) to a life of prayerful, humble and generous service. Like them we can Pray in Strength.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. As we looked at last week, it is the 'in' thing in business circles to do a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). But this week what would you consider to be your strengths? Be honest and realistic! Would God consider them strengths? Or are they strengths merely in the eyes of the world meaning they would be termed weaknesses in God's eyes?
2. How do you understand the word 'Joy'? It is mentioned 16 times in this letter. How can we experience joy when life is tough? See Nehemiah 8:10; Romans 12:12; Matthew 5:12; John 15:9-11.
3. Would you describe yourself as an anxious person? Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is when we feel anxious about nothing in particular just a sense that something bad is about to happen. Read verses 5,6 with 1 Peter 5:7 & give all your worries to God.
4. How does the peace of God guard our hearts and minds (verse 7)? See John 14:27.
5. Paul writes about the renewal of our minds (Romans 12:2). In what sense does our mind need renewing? The old hymn goes:-
*May the mind of Christ my Saviour live in me from day to day
By his love and power controlling all I do and say.*
Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 – do you have the mind of Christ?
6. Philippians 4:8,9 lists the positive things we can fill our minds with that will help us to focus on God and receive his peace in our hearts. What do you spend your time thinking about?
7. Read Isaiah 41:8-14. How does fear and anxiety sap our strength? The Lord promises to strengthen us in these verses. How does he do that?
8. Remember that Paul is writing from a position of weakness, suffering persecution, imprisoned as he is under house arrest in a foreign city. In verses 11 & 12 Paul writes of his contentment. He writes to Timothy, the young pastor of the church in Ephesus, that '*Godliness with contentment is great gain*' (1 Timothy 6:6). The message interprets this verse as 'the rich simplicity of being yourself before God'. Are you content? Are you comfortable in your own skin? How can this help us in our prayers for others?

It is Christ who strengthens us (verse 13). See Hebrews 4:14-16. We can pray in the strength God gives us knowing that the strength to pray comes from Jesus praying for us. See Romans 8:31-39, Hebrews 7:23-25.