



## **GROUP GUIDE – BREAKING THE CEILING - Wk 2 - HOW ARE WE TO PRAY?**

**ARRIVAL / CONNECTING and SNACK:** (15 minutes) Spend time catching up and socializing with one another. Follow up on prayer requests and any action steps from your last time together.

**SHORT OPENING PRAYER FOR YOUR TIME TOGETHER:** (2 minutes)

**SCRIPTURE and DISCUSSION:** (50 minutes) Open your Bibles to **1 Thessalonians 5:12-25**. Have one person read slowly enough for everyone to enjoy, then pause for silent reflection.

*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.*

*Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. Brothers, pray for us.*

Now read the above passage again, this time looking specifically for anything and everything it says about prayer and how we should pray.

- What are your observations?
- What other concepts in this passage are related to prayer? How are they related?
- In very practical terms, describe what you think it could mean to “pray without ceasing.”

Mark your place in **1 Thessalonians** and turn to **Philippians 4:4-9**. Read it and reflect.

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

- How are the two passages similar and how are they different?
- What does anxiety produce in your life?
- What does Philippians 4:4-9 suggest the fruit of prayer can be?

**SURRENDER:** (15 minutes) Talk about the realities of your own prayer life:

- Do you have any “prayer habits?” If so, what are they?
- How often are you prompted to pray during a “normal” day?
- What is satisfying about your prayer life? What is dissatisfying?
- What changes might you make personally to cultivate a more satisfying overall prayer life?
- What very practical steps might you take to increase your attention to prayer and move you toward the sort of prayer experience described in the passages you looked at today?

**CLOSING PRAYER:** (10 minutes ) Spend time praying for and encouraging one another.