

DEEPER THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER



INTRODUCTION

- Ask each member to define *prayer*.

SERMON REVIEW

- Spiritual discipline isn't easy.
- Discipline is chosen, repeated practice that yields a positive result! It's a holy habit.
- Let's define the discipline of prayer. It's not just thinking or sending good thoughts; nor is it worrying in God's presence or manipulating him! Rather, it's listening for God, and being aware of his presence; it is speaking to him with our words, our hearts, and even our silence. It's not merely communication, but communion.
- Why pray? Because God tells us to!
- Because it deepens your relationship with God (see Ephesians 3:14-19).
- Because it changes you as a person - making you more selfless, and allowing you to see things from God's perspective.
- Because it helps you understand your place in the world, and provides a means by which you can change that world (see James 5:17).
- It changes your brain, literally.
- You can grow in the discipline of prayer by choosing it as a way of life, understanding the stages of growth, developing your own prayer triggers, finding your own rhythms, and using the scriptures as your guide.
- In Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4, Jesus models prayer for his disciples. That model is to declare his greatness, his agenda, your needs, your weakness, your forgiveness, and his power & presence.
- He's not waiting for the perfect prayer, though! He just wants you to come to him.

DISCUSSION

- Based on these biblical texts and notes, how does your definition of prayer need to be modified?
- We talked about the way prayer changes the brain. Now read Romans 12:2, and discuss how prayer contributes to the renewal of our minds in broader terms.
- Read Matthew 6:9-13. Remembering that it is a model, not a magical formula - what guidance does Jesus provide to us through this prayer?
- Comparing your own practice of prayer with that of Jesus in Matthew 6:9-13, what are you missing?
- What tends to keep you from choosing prayer as a way of life?

- What things (such as prayer triggers or daily routines) have enhanced your own practice of prayer?
- How can you become more diligent in the practice of prayer? What will you do in response to this discussion?

CHALLENGE

- Adopt prayer as a lifestyle this week; don't just add it to your list of tasks. You can do this by creating prayer triggers, noting prayers throughout the day, memorizing and praying through a portion of Scripture, etc.

PLAN AHEAD

- We'll discuss the discipline of simplicity next. By way of preparation, consider the different meanings associated with the word "simple" and what simplicity could look like as a spiritual discipline in your own life.

CLOSING PRAYER