



NG Study Guide: Mark 14:32-42 “People of Prayer” (9.5.21)

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: R.A. Torrey observed, “One of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith is that God wants us to talk to Him about everything that is going on in our lives, even though He already knows everything.” So why pray? The life of Jesus is a life of prayer. His prayers are characterized by intensity and intimacy with the Father. He reminded us that the gathering of God’s people is to be a house of prayer (Mk. 11:17, Is. 56:7). His prayer life is intended to comfort us as He intercedes for us (Heb. 7:25); and to inspire us to grow as a people of prayer. So, let’s learn about prayer from Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

A. Prepared to do God’s will (32-36)

Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³ *And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.* ³⁴ *Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.”* ³⁵ *He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.* ³⁶ *And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.”*

Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane (32). Gethsemane means “olive press” and was where the olive oil was extracted from the groves of olive trees. It is in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus prepared to begin the restoration of what was lost in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). Jesus encouraged His disciples to remain while He went to pray (32).

And He took Peter, James, and John with Him (33). They were Jesus’ closest friends, His inner circle, and the only disciples who were present when Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead, and at the Mount of Transfiguration (Mk. 5,9).

Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. (34). Jesus is in deep distress as He contemplates taking the sin of the world upon Himself.

Prayer prepares us to do God’s will even when it is difficult

He went a little farther, per Luke a stone’s throw further (35, Lu. 22:41); *and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.* Jesus fell to the ground in prayer, and asks if it is possible for the hour to pass. In essence, if there is any other way for man and God to be reconciled apart from the cross and Jesus taking the sin of humanity upon Himself, then let it pass. The intensity of Jesus’ prayer is revealed by Luke, the beloved physician, who records that Jesus’ blood mingled with His sweat as He prayed (Lu. 22:40-44). The intimacy of Jesus’ prayer is revealed by the word

Abba (36). *Abba* is an Aramaic term that would best be translated “Papa.” Jesus affirms that all things are possible for His Father (36), but if there is no other way for humanity to be reconciled to God apart from the cross *not what I will, but what You will* (36). Jesus prays to resolve the struggle of the cross, to continue to completely trust His Father, and to obey or do God’s will. As Mark and Matthew observed, three times Jesus prayed for the cross to pass, and three times Jesus affirmed He was yielded to the Father’s will (35,36,39, Matt. 26:39-43). **Jesus’ example reminds us that the purpose of prayer is to see God’s will done on earth (Matt. 6:10).**

B. Prepared to resist temptation (37-42)

Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ³⁹ Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. ⁴⁰ And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. ⁴¹ Then He came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

Jesus finds Peter, James and John sleeping. We have no idea if He is upset, disappointed or not surprised. Jesus then said to Peter, “*Simon, are you sleeping?*” (37). Jesus refers to the disciple as “Simon” his birthname which means to listen or hear, rather than the name Jesus gave him “Peter” meaning rock. After Peter’s vehement protest following Jesus prediction that all the disciples would stumble it was a literal and figurative wake-up call. *Could you not watch one hour?* (37) is a gentle rebuke. Note, if you’re unable to pray for an hour you’re unlikely to resist temptation under extreme pressure.

Prayer prepares us to give Jesus His rightful place even when difficult

Jesus reveals the remedy to honor Him with our lives, *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak* (38). To *watch and pray* relates to being spiritually alert, communicating with and depending upon God. *Lest you* references “for fear that.” The *temptation* is to deny Jesus His rightful place as Lord in our lives. There is a cause and effect relation between prayer and response to temptation or the tests of our faith. Jesus wants us to prevail, and overcome the challenges to our faith. Our *flesh is weak but the spirit is available and willing*. We are involved in a spiritual battle, and prayer and the Word of God are our primary weapons (Eph. 6:12-18, Gal. 5:17-18). Prayer helps us to remain loyal, faithful, and under God’s authority when tempted.

Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words (39). Jesus continued to pray to prepare for His greatest temptation. Man’s relationship with God was damaged in the Garden of Eden, and thanks to Jesus was prepared for restoration in the Garden of Gethsemane.

When He returned, He found them asleep again (40). They likely started to pray and fell asleep again. Three times Jesus prayed, and three times they fell asleep (41). The time had come, Jesus was being betrayed to the religious leaders. He will be arrested and make His way slowly and painfully to the cross (41-42).

C. Prepared to grow as a people of prayer: Presumably all of us need to grow as people of prayer. **Five practical tips for prayer.**

View prayer as building a relationship with God rather than seeking to get something from God or avoiding something. Talk to God like a friend in conversation. Rather than coming to God like children with broken toys asking Him to repair or replace; or like a genie in the bottle where we ask to get something that we perceive as good from God or seek to avoid something that we perceive as bad, we should view prayer primarily as conversation with God to build relationship. Pray whenever God puts a need on your heart (1 Th. 5:17).

Ask for things that you believe bring glory to God and help you do His will (Jn. 14:12-17). Jesus encouraged His disciples, after they had been with Him for three years, to ask anything in prayer consistent with Jesus' nature and that would glorify God and it shall be done. Remember, we pray to see God's will done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

Prayer requests (supplication and intercession): Supplications can be thought of as earnest prayers on behalf of *our* requests, and intercessions are earnest prayers on *behalf of others*. Filling out prayer requests on the Nexus' app or site, and praying over the requests submitted by others (prayer@calvarynexus.org) are great ways to grow and help others to grow in the discipline of prayer.

Practice praying: practice praying alone and with others, silently and aloud. Look for rhythms in regard to time and place that can be set aside to foster the discipline of prayer. Also, Neighborhood Groups (NG), and prayer gatherings can be a great context to grow as person of prayer (and help others to grow too).

Develop intimacy, intensity, and endurance: Jesus' modeled (and taught) intimacy, intensity, and endurance in prayer (Lu.18:1-8). Like every other spiritual discipline, these characteristics of our prayer life take time to grow, but their development reflects spiritual maturity.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. How can prayer help believers to do God's will?

Q2. How can prayer help believers to resist temptation?

Q3. What are some practical tips that you've discovered that helped you to grow as a person of prayer?

Q4. How did your prayer life grow in the last season, and how would you like it to grow in the next?

"Disciples Who Dig Deeper" (optional or alternative study)

1. Here is a biblical perspective on prayer: <http://calvarynexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Prayer-Bruce-Zachary.pdf>.

2. Here is an helpful article on prayer: <https://www.gotquestions.org/why-pray.html>.

Love your neighbors (inside + outside the group) better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors inside or outside the group?

2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbors inside or outside the group?

Disciples who make disciples:

1. Who would like to share how they recently sought to make disciples?

2. Here is a disciple making idea to consider for the weeks ahead:

Before calling the twelve, Jesus prayed all night (Luke 6:12-13). Take some time to pray and ask God who He might want you to intentionally disciple in this season.

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
- 3. The "Disciples Who Dig Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Disciples Who Dig Deeper" section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.