

**Staying Power: “The Blessing!”**  
**Small Group Discussion**  
Daniel 9:1-27

**Intro question:** Give everyone an opportunity to answer.

- (Everyone) What is one thing you regularly pray for?
- (Whoever is comfortable) What role does prayer play in your life?

On Sunday we saw, in Daniel’s prayer, that *prayer can be the communication line in a hope-filled, dynamic relationship with God*. Spend some time discussing how that was the case for Daniel, and how it can be true for you, using the guide below.

**Read Daniel 9:1-3, then discuss the following.**

- What can you learn about Daniel’s habits in these first three verses?
- Read Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-11, to see what he had been reading.
- What realization has just hit Daniel? To what response does this realization move him?
- How is Daniel interacting with the Scriptures in a dynamic way—beyond just reading through them to check off a task on the list?
- To what degree do you interact with the Scriptures like this?
- On Sunday, Pastor Josh observed, “**Prayer that sustains prays in response to what God has already said.**”
- What would it look like for you to pray in response to something you’ve read in God’s word? If you have a recent example from your own prayer life, share that. If not, look at a favorite Bible passage and practice praying in response to that passage.
- How is this kind of prayer able to sustain you?

**Read Daniel 9:4-14, then discuss the following.**

- Point out all the times that you see Daniel confessing sin, guilt, or shame in this passage.
- How many times does Daniel point the finger of blame at someone else?
- Does anything strike you as surprising or unusual about what you see here?
- Compare what Daniel says of himself and his people, with what he says about God.
- How would you describe Daniel’s attitude toward God, as seen here?
- As we learned on Sunday, “**Prayer that sustains acknowledges where we are wrong and God is right.**” Why is this kind of prayer necessary for a dynamic, sustaining relationship with God?
- What about God’s character enables this kind of prayer to happen? (See v. 9).
- Would you say that this kind of prayer is a regular part of your prayer life? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about the practice of confessing collective sin, like Daniel—i.e., confessing the sins of your collective people, even if you haven’t personally committed them?

**Read Daniel 9:15-19, then discuss the following.**

- Seventy-five percent of Daniel’s prayer is spent praising God and confessing sin, while twenty-five percent is spent asking for something. How does this ratio compare to your prayers?
- What is the essence of Daniel’s request in these verses? Why does this matter so much to him? [Leaders: the Temple in Jerusalem was the one place in all the nations on earth where God allowed sacrifices for sin to be made, and where people could come into his presence with gladness and feasting, to worship him and enjoy him.]

- Pastor Josh summarized the implications of Daniel's request by saying, "**Prayer that sustains is prayer that views relationship with God as the greatest good.**" What does this mean, in your own words?
- C.S. Lewis writes, in *The Four Loves*, "We were made for God. Only by being in some respect like Him, only by being a manifestation of His beauty, lovingkindness, wisdom or goodness, has any earthly Beloved excited our love." What does he mean? How does this quotation relate to how we pray?
- What strikes you about the basis for Daniel's request, in v. 18? To what degree does this basis characterize your requests of God?

**Read Daniel 9:20-27, then discuss the following.**

- What do you notice about Gabriel's answer to Daniel, in vv. 20-23? What do we see here about God's view of Daniel?
- "Seventy sevens" is a symbolic way (based on the Year of Jubilee concept in Leviticus 25) of saying, "seventy times seven years," or 490 years. In v. 24, what do we see that God is going to do when this time period is complete?
- How is God's answer in v. 24 much greater than what Daniel was requesting?
- **Prayer that sustains sees how it has been overwhelmingly answered in Christ.** How do you see this fact predicted in the end of Daniel 9?
- In your prayer life, have you experienced the ability to see how your prayers are overwhelmingly answer in Christ? How has this insight changed you? If not, share with the group some of the things you're praying these days, and ask for help seeing how your prayers are answered in Christ.

**Conclusion**

- How do these four crucial elements in Daniel's prayer give us *staying power*?
- What is one thing from this series in Daniel that is likely to stick with you?

**Prayer**

- After you share your needs with one another, spend some time praying. In this week's prayer time, try to incorporate all four of the elements we discussed above.