

Prayer and the Ministry

Purpose: To lead students to a conviction for prayer that results in a prayer strategy for ministry.

Objectives: By the end of this lesson the student will be able to:

1. Give a broad overview of the place of prayer in God's plan
2. Devise a prayer strategy based upon prayer examples from Acts.
3. Have a growing desire to pray.

Key Verses: Colossians 1:9-12

I. Introduction

Share stories of powerful and effective prayers.

A. Scripture: James 5:16b-18

Prayer's power and effectiveness (16b)

Elijah's humanity and example of power and effectiveness (17-18)

B. The "Special Few" Syndrome

Too often prayer is relegated to a "special few" who are "gifted" in this area. Prayer is seen as side bar. Something that needs to be done by someone, a part of the plan, but something that can be passed on to someone who "specializes" in it. God never meant for it to be that way.

Prayer develops our relationship with God as we see Him respond to us. God intends for prayer to be the means by which His will is effected on earth. It is an indispensable supply-line needed by all, not just a spiritual discipline. Today, we want to look at the big picture on prayer and then discuss how to create a prayer strategy for our ministry.

II. The Big Picture on Prayer

A. Prayer builds our relationship with God.

Read Psalm 116:1-2

There is a daily, relational aspect of prayer. As we pray about life's needs and see Him answer, we learn more about God and become closer to Him.

Prayer builds our foundational relationship with God as Father. On the foundation of a relationship we learn more clearly of His heart for the world and what we should do to carry out His purposes on the earth.



B. Prayer carries out God's will on earth.

Read Matthew 6:10

God's plan is the establishment of His kingdom on the earth. His kingdom is recognized by willing obedience to His will. His will is discovered by the way things are done in heaven, which He has revealed to us in His word. By praying through Scripture we see His desires and request their actualization on earth.

Thy Kingdom come..... Plan of God
Thy will be done.....Submissive Spirit
On earth as it is in heaven.....Knowledge of God's ways

How do we carry out God's will through prayer?

C. Prayer Enables Others.

Read 1 Samuel 12:23; Acts 12:5; 1 Timothy 2:1-3

Look at the role, privilege and responsibility of intercession. We stand before God for others. We help carry out God's plan for others. This completes the triangle, but takes the cycle to a deeper level. As we reign (Revelation 5:10) we seek Him more, carry out His purpose greater, rule better, and so on and so on.

III. A Call to Prayer

Prayer is not optional, nor a specialized role, but the place of every Christian.

Read Acts 6:4; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-2

As Christians we all too often allow things to push prayer out, we need to push the other things out with prayer.

IV. Models of Prayer: Design for a Prayer Strategy Based upon Acts

Look up the verses below, and look for principles whereby a prayer strategy could be created for your ministry.

The instructor could have the students break up into groups of about four and discuss their answers together. After about 5 minutes, have them report and list their findings on a board. Have them discuss what they can do to start a strategy.

Prayers in Acts:

- 1:12-14 — *Continually devoting themselves to prayer*
- 2:42 — *teaching, fellowship, communion, prayer*
- 3:1 — *up to the temple at the ninth hour*

4:23-31 — *prayed, shook, evangelized*

12:1-17 — *Peter imprisoned, late night prayer meeting*

16:25 — *Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns*

V. Application

- A. Design with the rest of the team a prayer strategy for your target area.

Instructor can have the students get into their target area groups to discuss this and formulate a plan.

- B. Take the following verses and look for the kinds of things Paul regularly prayed for those in his care. Pick out ones you want to pray for who are in your care and be prepared to share them in class and with your mentor.

Note to instructor: Have the students share what they wrote in their target area groups. After some time, you could have some share with the whole class.

Ephesians 1:18-19; 3:14-19; 6:18-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4; II Thessalonians 1:11-12; 2:16-17

Close with a powerful story about the impact of prayer in modern times.

He who fails to pray, limits God to his own abilities.

Note to instructor: with any remaining time, have the students discuss the following questions.

Discussion Questions:

1. What would be a broad overview of the place of prayer in God's plan?
2. How would you devise a prayer strategy based upon prayer examples from Acts?
3. How has this lesson helped you have a growing desire to pray.