

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Conversing with God: Abraham

TEXT: *Genesis 18:16-33*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: If we are honest, many of us admit that we pray most often when we are faced with a crisis, such as exams, big career decisions, dealing with suffering or the loss of a loved one. In such times of prayer, our deeper motives may also surface. Sometimes, too, we feel God is silent in the midst of such crises. In this story, Abraham suddenly finds God telling him about a crisis that will soon overtake the city in which his nephew lives. There then follows a remarkable conversation.

1. In what ways do you think God might appear to behave or act unreasonably or unfairly?
2. Read Genesis 18:16-33. From the evidence in the passage, describe the relationship that exists between Abraham and God.
How does this affect the way God behaves toward Abraham?
3. How and what we pray usually reflects our motives for praying; from this passage, what do you think Abraham was most concerned about?
4. Inverses 16-17, God appears to initiate the conversation with Abraham, and in verse 33 he ends it. How does this match up with your own experiences in prayer?
5. What motivates you to pray for other people, especially those who do not follow Christ?
6. A recurrent theme in the passage is the fact that God appears to be planning to simultaneously destroy the righteous and the wicked. Abraham refers to this several times (w. 23-24, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32). Why does he repeatedly bring up the issue?
7. From the passage what are the distinctive characteristics of an intercessor?
8. God does not appear to be angry with Abraham for asking questions—even when he appears to question God's justice. How does this give us reassurance when we pray in difficult or confusing circumstances?
9. God still went on to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah (you can read the rest of the story in chapter 19). What thoughts and feelings might Abraham have gone through after his conversation with God had ended?
10. This passage highlights a further aspect of prayer we easily forget—that God may speak to us in prayer. List and discuss ways in which you have experienced God guiding and prompting you in prayer, or changing your views as you pray.
11. Abraham listened to God and as a consequence learned more about him. How, practically, can we ensure that we try to listen to God when we pray?
12. For the next week, deliberately set aside a brief time each day to listen to God by meditating on a passage of Scripture. If you are meeting with a group, discuss what you have learned at the next meeting.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Discovering God's Will: Moses

TEXT: *Exodus 32:1-14*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: Sometimes we may wonder if prayer changes anything. "If God has his plans, and will work out his purposes, do we really need to pray?" In this passage we see Moses the intercessor at work. Intercession is prayer on behalf of those deserving God's judgment. Abraham in the previous study interceded too; but Moses' prayer of intercession in this passage has a different (although equally significant) result.

1. When you pray about friends or families who are unbelievers, what do you usually pray for them?
2. Read Exodus 32:1-14. Why do you think Israel made a golden calf to worship?
3. How does God feel about the Israelites' worship of the golden calf (w. 7-10, 12)? Why?
4. In what way(s) does the idea of God judging people for their sin affect the way you pray for people?
5. What does the passage show us about Moses' character and priorities as an intercessor?
6. Given the actions of the Israelites (w. 1-6), if you were Moses, how would you have responded to God's offer in verse 10 to make him a great nation?
7. Verse 11 shows Moses' reaction to God's command to stand aside in verse 10. What internal conflicts or divided loyalties might Moses have felt as he spoke to God?
8. What personal risk(s) does Moses' prayer involve?
9. Moses appeals to God not to destroy the children of Israel (w. 11-13), reminding God of his promises in Scripture. Why do you think he made his appeal to God in this way?
10. Why do you think God chose to follow an alternative course of action (v. 14) to that which he originally outlined (v. 10)?
11. Summarize what the passage teaches us about prayer and its importance.
12. Who do you need to ask God to have mercy for?
13. List people for whom and situations about which you can begin to intercede on a regular basis. Keep a record of the answers to prayer and any guidance about how to pray received from God. If you are meeting with a group, in two or three weeks discuss how your prayer for the person or situation is changing, and what has happened as result of praying.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Answered Prayer: Nehemiah

TEXT: *Nehemiah 1:1—2:8*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: If I ask a group of Christians what they find difficult about prayer, one of the issues usually raised is "Why aren't my prayers answered?" Sometimes it is our unwillingness to be obedient to God that means our prayers are not answered. And, sometimes, we are not prepared to let God use us to answer our prayers. Jerusalem, the location of the temple of God, was to the Old Testament believer the center of their devotion (as it is for Jews today). Nehemiah, a Jew in exile, was a senior official in the Persian royal court, strategically placed to be part of the answer to his prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

1. How does what you feel about something or someone affect the way you pray?
2. Nehemiah 1:1—2:8. What motive(s) ultimately prompts Neh. to approach the king (1:2-3)?
3. In 1:4 Nehemiah reacts strongly to the news brought to him in 1:2-3. How might Nehemiah's feelings have affected the way he then prayed?
4. Look carefully at the lengths of time (1:1; 2:1) over which Nehemiah prayed. Why might Nehemiah have had to (or wanted to) pray for a long time about the issues that concerned him?
5. Nehemiah 1:5 shows us the first stage of Nehemiah's prayer. How can focusing on God at the beginning of our prayers enable us to pray with more confidence?
6. Nehemiah's prayer then goes on to repentance (1:6-7), not only for his own sin, but also his people's wrongdoing. Why might he have felt the need to both repent personally and identify with the sin of others?
7. For what reasons might Nehemiah have returned to God's promises and previous dealings with the children of Israel (1:8-10) as part of his prayer?
8. Nehemiah 1:11 and 2:4 give us an understanding of how Nehemiah saw God in control over the circumstances he faced. How does our understanding of God's sovereignty affect the way we pray for situations?
9. In 1:11—2:8 we see Nehemiah taking steps to tackle the problem of Jerusalem's walls being broken down (1:3). In light of the enormous human and practical odds Nehemiah was up against, what do you think gave him confidence to embark on the task God had given him to do?
10. Nehemiah's fear in 2:2 indicates the risks he was taking in approaching the king on this issue. Why do you think Nehemiah was allowed to speak and ask for help?
11. What does Nehemiah's request show us about his thinking and prayer prior to his audience with the king?
12. What lessons from Nehemiah's prayers help you in your own prayer life?
13. During the next week, write down what you pray for each day and, next to that, note practical ways in which you could be involved in answering your own prayers. If you are studying with a group, discuss what you have learned from the exercise in the next meeting.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Prayer and Spiritual Conflict: Daniel

TEXT: *Daniel 10*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: Christians often react in one of two ways to spiritual conflict. They assume everything stems from it and become unhealthily fascinated by it. Or they don't think it's a problem. Seeing spiritual conflict in the way God sees it is critical. Daniel 10 not only teaches us more about intercession and intercessors, but also gives us a rare insight into the realities of the heavenly places, and a hint of the importance of our prayer in such situations.

1. Some Christians can identify times in their lives when they have felt very close to God. If you have had such an experience, what has been its lasting impact on your Christian discipleship?
2. Read Daniel 10. What can you tell about the character of Daniel from the passage?
3. Daniel received a message from God concerning a great war. He then refused to eat certain foods and mourned for a period of three weeks (w. 2-3). Why do you think he did this?
From the fact of his partial fast, it appears that Daniel took the idea of fasting seriously. What place should it have in our prayer lives?
4. The description of the "man" Daniel saw in verses 5-6 is very similar to John's description of Christ in Revelation 1:13-15. Or it may have been an angel. Even though Daniel had received a visit from a heavenly being before, this was still a very unusual occurrence. Why do you think God went to this length to communicate with Daniel?
- 5- Daniel was dramatically affected by the revelation he received (see w. 8-9 and 15-17). What does the passage teach us about the way in -which God deals with us?
6. What lasting effects do you think Daniel's experience had on his relationship with God?
7. We often interpret world events on a purely human level. God reveals to Daniel that there is a spiritual battle going on behind the scenes for his people (w. 13, 20, 21). What evidence is there in the passage of the effect of Daniel's prayer on this spiritual battle in the heavenly places?
8. Note that Daniel does not directly fight with the satanic forces referred to ("the prince of the Persian kingdom" [v. 13], "the prince of Persia... the prince of Greece" [v. 20]). How does this reassure us when we think about spiritual warfare?
- 9- How does what the "man" (or angel) says in the passage help us to understand God's role in human history?
10. How does Daniel's prayer and consequent involvement in spiritual conflict help us to realize that our prayer makes a difference—even if we don't fully understand the implications?
11. How can we ensure that our understanding of what we pray for has as clear a spiritual or heavenly perspective as possible?
12. Decide on two or three world situations for which you want to pray by yourself or with a group. Remember to pray about these regularly.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Praying for the Nation: Ezekiel

TEXT: *Ezekiel 22:23-31*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: Have you ever wondered what Jesus would say about your nation if he walked through its streets today?

Ezekiel, a priest, was called by God to warn his people of God's judgment. Already humiliated in defeat by the Babylonians, Judah was spiritually bankrupt. Like most of his fellow citizens, Ezekiel lived in exile amidst idolatry and materialism. His people, his nation and its leaders paid lip service to their beliefs, but led lives that were far from pleasing to God. The passage is the third of three warnings in chapter 22 alone about the sin of Jerusalem and its people.

1. In what ways do you think that Christians' influence on national life could be greater than it is?
2. Read Ezekiel 22:23-31. Rain (v. 24) is probably a symbol of God's grace and kindness. Its absence suggests that Jerusalem and Judah are a spiritual "desert." God has almost withdrawn his presence from the land and is angry at the sins he sees. List the sins which have brought God to the point where he wishes to execute judgment.
3. Societies are interdependent. What we do affects others. How would the moral failure of each of the five groups mentioned in the passage (princes, prophets, priests, officials and people) affect the other four groups?
4. The priests would have been the principle intercessors. How would their shortcomings (v. 26) have affected their prayer for the nation?
5. The prophets (in Old Testament times those who spoke God's truth into specific situations) were failing to fulfill their responsibilities (v. 28). What do you think motivated them to behave as they did?
6. What moral qualities do you think the spiritual and secular leaders of a nation should possess?
7. The phrase "stand before me in the gap" (v. 30) is symbolic of intercession in the Old Testament. The absence of an intercessor had catastrophic consequences. Why do you think no one wanted to intercede? How do you think intercession can affect world events today?
8. Not finding anyone to take positive action to set the nation back on course (to "build up the wall" as Nehemiah did) is seen by God as a problem as serious as having no intercessor. Alongside prayer, what else is necessary for Christians to be a godly influence on their nation?
9. Christians in some countries feel they can have no impact on the life of their nation because they are so few in number. How can this passage encourage believers in such a situation?
10. We often blame our national "leaders." Clearly from this passage all groups in society bear responsibility for the state of the nation. How should this affect the way we intercede for and live in our nations?
11. How is God calling you to stand in the gap?
12. Spend time praying for various national leaders. You might use information from newspapers or magazines to help you pray in a more informed way.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Praying for Everyone: Paul

TEXT: *Timothy 2:1-8*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: How was it like to be involved in the early church? Acts tells us what was central to its life: Bible teaching, practical fellowship, the sacraments and prayer. The early believers demonstrated social responsibility, were respected by outsiders and daily saw people come to Christ (Acts 2:42-47). Often our church life falls far short of the biblical ideal. Prayer needs its rightful place in the agenda. In this passage we find the apostle Paul addressing various issues concerning the church and its worship. Interestingly, Paul addresses the issue of prayer first—as one of primary importance to the early church in Ephesus in which Timothy was involved. The issues Paul discusses also provide us with a framework in which to review what we have learned in the studies so far.

1. Why is prayer important? (Use what you have learned from studies 1-5 to respond.)
2. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-8. What reasons does Paul give in the passage for the importance of prayer?
- 3- Apart from giving instruction on prayer, Paul also discusses essential Christian doctrines in verses 4-6. What do you think Paul is implying here about the relationship between prayer and doctrine?
4. Paul encourages us to pray for all people, but then highlights a particular example (v. 2). Why is prayer for such people important? (You may also want to draw on studies 3-5 in your response.)
5. Paul seems to be saying that good leaders and bad leaders need the same approach—we have to pray for them all. Looking at studies 1-2, what attitudes do intercessors demonstrate toward people they pray for?
6. How do you think that prayer might lead to us live "peaceful & quiet lives in all godliness and holiness"?
7. Paul underlines (w. 3-6) that God longs for all to come to know him through Christ—even though many will reject him. What have studies 1-6 taught you or reinforced for you about praying for non-Christians?
8. Why do you think prayer is "good, and pleases God our Savior" (v. 3)? (Draw on what you have been learning in these studies.)
9. Paul emphasizes in verse 8 the godly moral integrity ("holy hands") and unity of believers. Why is this important if we are to pray as Paul directs?
10. Drawing on what you have seen in each of the people we have studied so far, what aspects of character are important in an intercessor?
11. What character quality would you most like to develop? What steps do you need to take to do that?
12. Ask God to "teach you how to pray," asking him to help you in the areas in which you need to grow. If you are meeting with a group, spend some time praying together about the prayer lives of the group members, particularly what you all have been learning about prayer and areas of prayer in which you each need encouragement.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Relying on God: David

TEXT: *Psalms 5*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: Feeling betrayed, persecuted or fearful are common human experiences, Christians are not immune to such experiences. Indeed, because of the opposition of the fallen world to Christ, we will inevitably face them. How do we pray in these circumstances? Instead of allowing our fear or anger to dominate our thinking, we need to focus on God. Psalm 5 is one example of a prayer written in the face of opposition.

1. What happens to your relationship with God (especially your prayer life) when you find yourself facing pressure, opposition or persecution?
2. Read Psalm 5. Instead of dealing with his enemies by becoming aggressive or planning revenge, David turns to God in prayer. Summarize the requests David makes of God.
3. David is clearly accustomed to beginning his day with prayer (v. 3). What are the benefits of this model?
4. David appears confident that God hears his prayer (v. 3). What does he say about the character of God that would give him such confidence?
5. List the characteristics of the wicked and the righteous from David's descriptions in the passage.
6. How might David's understanding of God's judgment upon his present or future enemies (w. 4-6 and 10) have affected the way David dealt with his enemies?
7. While David clearly sees his enemies as the source of his problems, he sees their sins as the heart of their rebellion against God (v. 10). How can this perspective help us to pray for those who oppose us or persecute us because of our faith?
8. How might David's description of God's view of evil (w. 4, 10) help us when we feel like blaming God for pain or persecution?
9. David clearly saw God as his source of refuge (v. 11), protection (v. 11), blessing (v. 12) and as a "shield" (v. 12). In what ways do you think David's awareness of God in these terms helped him to remain faithful during the attacks on him?
10. What aspects of David's prayer in this passage are helpful models for you?
11. Think of any situations that represent a threat or pressure for you. Spend some time praying about those situations, trying to focus particularly on God's power and supremacy over the situation (while being realistic about the difficulties!).

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Being Honest with God: Hannah

TEXT: *Samuel 1*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: As you grow in maturity, God's will, God's purposes, God's honor will increasingly concern you. But however mature you may become, you will never cease to have griefs and joys of your own. If prayer that concerns God's honor is to be called higher prayer, I must make it clear that you must never stop appealing to God about your sorrows and heartaches. Lower prayer, if we adopt such an expression, will be necessary as long as you live. 'Have no anxiety about anything,' writes Paul to the Philippian church, 'but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God' (Philippians 4:6)."

1. In what ways has your experience of suffering strengthened your faith as a Christian?
2. Read 1 Samuel 1. What evidence is there in the passage of faithful and godly living by Elkanah and his family?
3. Many of the prayers studied so far are for other people—the lost, leaders and nations. List the ways in which this story illustrates the concern of God for individual believers and their needs.
4. We often feel conflict between what we want and what we think God wants, and we may have mixed motives when we pray as to why we pray for things. What internal conflicts or mixed motives might Hannah have experienced as she prayed?
How do you think the way that God answers prayer is affected by the purity of our motives?
5. Verse 5 is evidence that Hannah's prayer was initiated by God. When has God put you in a situation through which you now realize you were being prompted to pray?
6. Verses 10-16 demonstrate Hannah's honesty in prayer to God. She does not hide her feelings, pain, hurt or desire. What might prevent us from being this direct with God if we were in a similar situation?
7. It is often hard for us to understand other people's suffering. Eli's blessing in verse 17 is very different in tone from his initial reaction to Hannah in verses 13-14. How and why do his views of her change throughout the story?
8. According to the passage, how did Hannah view the child she was asking for?
- 9- Samuel was one of the most significant leaders in Israel's history, and was born at a turning point in the history of the nation. How does God's use of Hannah's personal circumstances to bring about his wider objectives help us to understand the purpose of suffering?
10. Compare verse 18 with verses 6-16. How do you explain Hannah's change of mood and apparent sense of assurance?
11. Verses 21-28 detail the events after Hannah's prayer was answered. However, the actions of Hannah and Elkanah relate back to the promise Hannah made in verse 11. What does this teach us about their character as believers?
12. When are you hesitant to take personal requests before God?
- 13- Silently read and reflect on 1 Samuel 2:1-10. How are you encouraged by this passage? Spend some time thanking God for the things you have learned.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Thanking God: Mary

TEXT: *Luke 1:46-55*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: Our rights—under the constitution—are very important to us. We (often justifiably) defend them jealously and assert them freely just as we guard on freedoms and privileges. We may, however, rarely stop to say thank you for any of them. We can even carry the same attitudes over into our Christian lives. Rights and freedoms can become more important than service and responsibility, success more valuable than obedience, status more spiritual than humility. We expect God's blessings because we deserve them.

Jesus' mother, Mary, had few rights and minimal privileges in her culture-and in her religion. And she was probably the last person to expect to be the mother of Christ. She does not applaud God for choosing her, or demand reward for taking the job on. Instead, she prays conscious of her God-given significance and the privilege of her calling.

1. In what sorts of circumstances do you find it difficult to thank God?
2. Read Luke 1:46-55. What does the passage show us about what Mary thought God was like?
3. What does the passage show us about how Mary saw herself before God?
4. Verses 46-47 tell us that Mary glorified the Lord and rejoiced in her Savior. In what ways can we do this in our prayers?
- 5- Verse 50 tells us that God's mercy extends to those who fear him. How does your "fear" of God affect the way that you pray to him?
6. Mary prayed in thankfulness for being chosen as Christ's mother. However, she also refers to many other actions of God in her prayer. What does this show us about her understanding of God?
7. Imagine you have a Christian friend who feels that God is remote from his or her situation and has no sense of God's presence in his or her daily life. Consequently, prayer is difficult. How can you help that person to pray?
8. In what ways do verses 51-53 both reassure us and act as a warning to us?
9. In verses 54-55, Mary speaks of God acting consistently with what he had previously promised. How can the ways that God has fulfilled his biblical promises be a basis for thanksgiving in our prayer lives?
10. How should praising and thanking God take a different place in your prayer life? Explain your answer.
11. Make a list of things that God has done in past history, and things that have happened in the last week, that you want to thank God for. (If you are meeting with a group, make a list together.) Spend some time in thanksgiving.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Blessing Other People: Paul

TEXT: *Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: Hillary," Beth began, "Thanks so much for your letter. I'm really sorry to hear that the way ahead seems so confusing and that you find the lack of obvious guidance so hard to deal with. I want to reassure you that I do pray for you and that I ask God to clearly guide you as to the next step in your career. I pray that the Lord will bless you." Beth put her pen down. "Bless?" she thought. "What do I mean? Hillary is in such a difficult situation that I don't know what is best to pray for her. If I just say 'bless,' it sounds like I can't be bothered to think of anything else. What will she think? What does God want me to pray? If I say 'bless,' will he know what I mean?"

It's not easy to know how to pray for a friend in need. In this passage we see how Paul prays for his friends.

1. How do you decide what to pray for another person?
2. Read Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21. What seems to be Paul's motive in praying for those he is writing to?
- 3- What themes run through Paul's prayers in the two passages?
4. Ephesians 1:15-23 refers back to 1:3-14 (thus the expression "for this reason" in verse 15). Look briefly at that section of Scripture. What does this tell you about the source of Paul's prayer requests?
- 5- Like any group of Christians, the churches Paul wrote to must have contained difficult or rebellious Christians—maybe even Christians who did not like Paul. Despite this, Paul gives thanks for them all in 1:16. Why could Paul still do this and pray for them as he did?
6. Look specifically at what Paul prays in 1:17-19. Describe effects on the lives of the believers that you think Paul's prayers might have brought about.
If Paul has been praying for non-Christians, in what ways would his request have been different?
7. In the latter part of 1:19 Paul concentrates on God's demonstration of his power through the death and resurrection of Christ. Why do you think he does this?
8. Turn to 3:14-21. How do Paul's words emphasize or illustrate the depth of relationship with God that he wanted to see in the Ephesian believers?
Why might he so strongly stress this depth of relationship (or intimacy) with God?
- 9- Paul considers the love of Christ (3:16-19). Why is it important for you to be conscious of Christ's love in your daily life?
10. Ephesians 3:20 reminds us of God's power and supremacy. How should our understanding of God's ability to change people and circumstances affect the way we pray?
11. Paul clearly longed for these Christians to grow in their relationship with God—and prayed accordingly. How, specifically, can Paul's example help us to pray for those around us?
12. Using the central themes of Paul's prayer as a basis, spend time praying for other Christians that you know, or, if you are meeting with a group, you can pray for each other.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Praying Together: The Early Church

TEXT: *Acts 4:23-31*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: One of the marks of the early church was that they prayed together—R great effect. The missionary activity of the early believers continued to grow as they prayed together (Acts 2:42) and as the Lord empowered them K evangelize.

But what were their prayer meetings like? Acts 4 gives us the opportunity to listen in on one of the early church's prayer meetings, to see how and what they prayed for. The New Testament letters and the practice of the early church underline the place of group prayer and its importance. Likewise, it should b one activity we emphasize in the church today.

1. Some people enjoy praying with other Christians, while others find it; terrifying experience. What contribution to your Christian life and witness ha praying with other Christians made?
2. Read Acts 4:23-31. Peter and John have just been released from imprisonment by the religious authorities, for preaching about Christ, and performing miracles. In what way(s) is the early church's response to such persecution surprising?
3. What does the passage teach us about the unity of the believers?
4. In what ways can praying with other Christians build unity?
5. List the aspects of God's character that appear to be in the minds of the believers as they pray. How would concentrating on the character of God help the believers get a perspective on the persecution they faced?
6. Sometimes we find events in the world confusing; for example, when evil seems to triumph over good. What can we learn from verses 24-28 to help us understand such situations?
7. Look at the requests in verses 29-30. What do they teach us about the believers' priorities and attitudes?
8. Not all answers to prayers are dramatic, but the believers' prayer was cle answered (v. 3D. Sometimes we can be surprised by how God answers < prayers. Why do you think this is?
- 9- Verse 31 tells us that a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit enabled I church to be bold in its evangelism. How does this compare with Christians often desire from their experience of the Holy Spirit?
10. What do you find difficult about praying with others? (If you are meeting with a group, talk specifically about your group.)
What 'would help you with group prayer?
11. Pray about specific situations in evangelism that you face, especially with boldness is required.

ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Study to show "The Way of True life,"

Bible Study Outline

TOPIC: Praying with Confidence: Jesus

TEXT: *Luke 11:1-13*

Instructions: *Let the above passages be read to enable everyone to participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on certain follow-up questions. Always try to use relevant but brief Bible references to illustrate your points, and be careful not to dominate the discussion.*

Introduction: Confidence is a vital factor in human relationships. The confidence that we can trust our friends—to keep a promise or to help us out in difficult circumstances—enables us to feel secure. And, more importantly, it enables our friendships to grow in an environment of openness. Trust should characterize our relationship with God. Even though we let him down, he wants us to live in the knowledge that he is absolutely reliable. He hears our prayers, longs to answer them in accordance with his will, and is totally fair.

1. What aspects of prayer would you most like reassurance about?
2. Read Luke 11:1-13- What different aspects of prayer do you see included in the prayer in verses 2-4?
In what ways do the different aspects and emphases in the prayer provide a model for your own prayer life?
3. Why do you think the friend overcomes his initial reluctance to help his neighbor (w. 5-8)?
4. The friend gives his neighbor "as much as he needs" in answer to his request (v. 8). What does this passage teach us about the answers we receive to our prayers? j
5. Luke 11:9-10 considers the issue of persistence in prayer. How does the passage help us to understand what "persistence in prayer" involves. |
6. Jesus teaches on prayer because a disciple asks for teaching in verse 1.1 Luke 18:1 he reminds them that "they should always pray and not give up We are all tempted not to pray—or stop praying when we should pray. In what practical ways can we resist such temptation?
7. In what ways does this passage help you to be more confident about prayer?
8. Studies 1-6 concentrated on examples of intercession. What other types of prayer have you learned about in studies 7-12? 9- To what extent does your prayer life reflect a healthy balance between the different types of prayer?
10. How has your understanding of praying when faced with opposition or persecution changed as a result of studies 7 and 11?
11. What practical steps do you need to take (individually or as a group) to develop your prayer life?
12. Pray about the aspects of prayer for which you feel the need for reassurance, following up on any issues raised by questions 1 and 11.