



Love God



Love One Another



Do Mission Together

Home Group study: week beginning 8th January 2023

TITLE: Prayer and Fasting – The Lord's Prayer (part 1)

PASSAGE: Matthew 6 v9-10

Icebreaker

Have you heard of the term Near Death Experience? Get someone to describe it. Has anyone read about it or even experienced it? Talk about it a bit.

Discovery

On Sunday there was a brief story of an American surgeon, Mary Neal, and what happened when she drowned in a river rapids in the Andes. This is a summary:

- Drowned and heart stopped for 30 minutes - i.e. dead!
- Was revived and rescued miraculously, and recovered.
- While she was 'dead' she was taken to heaven and saw wonderful things.
- But she was also told her son would die young.
- ... to cut a long story short ...
- Her son did die from a tragic accident.

Here's the point:

- In the field where he died there were loads of 'mountain roses'.
- Later that year these flowers began to grow in her garden. And since then they appear in all the places she calls special - just one each time. She is so sure it is God's miraculous blessing now, that when she sees it she just smiles and thanks him.
- Question: Is there something in your life that is a miraculous, constant reminder of God's love for you? What do you think about the idea?

Discussion

What does the above say about God, if that sort of thing really happens?

What did God create us for? 'To glorify him and enjoy him for ever.' (First Greater Westminster Catechism)

How do we glorify him? Discuss. You could bring in Paul's prayer in Colossians 1:9-14. And Phil 2:14-15.

How do we enjoy him? Discuss. Also, when we 'forget not all his benefits' as Ps 103:2. Discuss.

Do both of these require us to know him?

Read Eph 1:17 - discuss the emphasis on 'knowing God'.

Getting to know God through 'relational prayer' was an idea offered on Sunday. Relating with God through the word and through abiding with him were mentioned.

Discuss what this might look like. Is it a viable type of prayer?

Read Matt 6:9-10 - the Lord's Prayer. Consider how each element could be considered 'relational'.

Consider how the familiar types of prayer - worship, thanksgiving, intercession (prayer for others) and petition (prayer for oneself) might follow on from 'relational prayer' or more simply, be prompted by time spent simply communing with God in contemplation and in his word.

If you feel like it you could bring in the ideas of 'True Prayer - God-centred' and 'False Prayer - Me-centred', that were mentioned on Sunday. Graphics from the talk have been circulated by email and are on the WhatsApp Fellowship group. Note that they are meant to challenge our often muddle-headed approach to communicating with God. They come from the book 'The PAPA Prayer' by Larry Crabb (which, by the way, asserts that the Lord's Prayer is the best biblical model for prayer).

What is your relationship with God like? What is your normal pattern of prayer one-2-one with him?

Where does 'intercession' fit in with all of this in your life?

Our 3 weeks of prayer and fasting are based on the Lord's Prayer.

Pray for each other, and use the section of the Lord's Prayer we've looked at today to pray for God's kingdom to be advanced and for his will to be done in our midst - personally and for our fellowship.