

“Prayer Problems” Discussion Guide

1. Open the session with prayer. Ask if there is someone who would like to volunteer to pray with the group. If not, be prepared to pray.
2. Read Romans 11.33-36
 - a. Paul extols God's glory saying “O the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” He then quotes Isaiah asking, “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” How does this affect your understanding of times when God's answer to your prayers is “No.”?
3. Biblical characters had God say no to them or felt that their prayers were unanswered. Moses prayed to enter the Promised Land and was not allowed to; David prayed for his child to live and he died; Paul asked for his thorn in the flesh to be removed three times and God simply replied “My grace is sufficient for you” Jesus prayed for the cup of crucifixion to pass, but he was still executed. How does this help you when your prayers seem to be unanswered?
4. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest) how big a problem has unanswered prayer been in your relationship with God?
5. How has unanswered prayer affected you and the people you love?
6. In what ways have unanswered prayers affected your relationship with and expectations of God?
7. Jesus told The Parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke 18.1-8) in order that the disciple would pray constantly and not lose heart. Although we may find no explanation as to why God doesn't answer a specific prayer, what have you seen happen in terms of your relationship with God, your view of life, your self-examination, your commitment to action – when you must pray with persistence instead of making a request once and having God answer it as you would like?
8. When we are hurting or are in great need, it can be difficult to consider the possibility that our actions or attitudes may actually hinder our prayers, yet that is exactly what the Bible tells us. Read the following passages individually and ask what we can learn from these passages about the effect that disobedience has on God's willingness to hear – and respond – to our prayers.
 - Psalm 66.18
 - Isaiah 1.15-17
 - Isaiah 59.1-2
 - Zechariah 7.8-13
 - James 4.3