

Study Guide for the Week of March 19, 2006

Can You Hear Me Now? A Study on Prayer—What Should We Pray?

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.saintpauls-umc.com.

Monday – Today we will look at several short scriptures that give us various understandings about prayer. **Read Philippians 4:6-7.** According to this scripture when should we pray? What should we pray about? What does it say will be the result of our prayers? Notice that this scripture tells us that God will guard our hearts as if to say that there will be difficult times that we will face, but in the midst of them, we will be guarded with God's peace. **Read Matthew 17:20.** Aaron talked about how we should never assume that because a prayer was not answered that it was because of a lack of faith on our part or on the part of the person we were praying for. All it takes is a little faith in our big God for big things to happen. **Read Philippians 4:19.** This is telling us that God will supply all our needs. Notice that it doesn't say "wants." What is the difference between a want and a need?

Tuesday – **Read Luke 18:1-8.** This passage begins as a way for Jesus to encourage his followers to be persistent when they pray; however, this can be a confusing parable. While the judge in this story is unjust, that is meant to stand in contrast with God who **is** just. If an unjust judge finally gives in to the woman's request, how much more will our God who loves us meet our needs? What do you draw from this passage? Are you persistent in your prayers or do you tend to give up quickly?

Wednesday – **Read Matthew 18:19-20.** This is a powerful encouragement by Jesus for us to pray together. Where 2 or more are gathered together Christ is there among them. This is not meant to imply that Christ is absent when we are by ourselves. Instead it means that when we gather with others, Christ is there in a special way, a way that allows us to see his face in the face of those we are with. Do you pray with others? If so, how do you pray when you are with them? This is another important facet of being in a small group or prayer group where we can join our hearts with others in this very special way. If you're not in a small group, consider this one more reason to do so.

Thursday – **Read James 5:13-18.** This is more encouragement for us to pray together with others. Aaron used this passage in reference to the Prayer and Healing Service held the 4th Monday of each month at 7:00p.m. This is a quiet, gentle way to open ourselves to God's healing. Many people resist taking part in such services because of images they have from television evangelists. But this is a quiet, reflective time where you will be led in prayer and have the opportunity to have someone pray for you, or the ones you love. This service is one way that we live out this Bible passage. What might keep you from taking advantage of such a time of worship and prayer?

Friday – **Read John 17.** This is a very intimate look at Jesus' prayer life. Here he is praying for his disciples then and now. Notice the intimacy with which he prays. Notice the honesty and concern. Notice how specific he is. What does this prayer tell you about what prayer is? What can you draw from this example of prayer to apply to your own life? Aaron encouraged us to pray so that we can become the people God would have us become. Are you taking the steps that will allow that to happen? If not, why not? And why not begin today?