

Community Group Discussion Questions

THE WAY FORWARD – NO. 2 “Prayer” – Ephesians 3:20-21

Theme: *Each part of this closing prayer (or doxology) raises our focus well beyond our weaknesses, failures and inadequacies to a view of God’s power that brings great encouragement.*

The two verses we’re considering contain a prayer of doxology. With them, Paul concludes a remarkable section on prayers (see 3:14-19) that he has been offering for these Christians. Everything that Paul writes here, especially verses 20-21, raises our focus well beyond our weaknesses, failures and inadequacies to a view of God’s power that brings great encouragement. Paul has prayed for some amazing things to happen in the lives of these believers. It is as if there is nothing more that he can say in light of such requests, but to offer praise to God, which he does in our text.

Here we are encouraged to pray for strength, closeness with Christ, love for others, an awareness of how much we are loved by Christ, and for intimacy with God (3:14-19). If we are going to pray for such staggering requests, we need to catch a glimpse of the greatness of God’s power that makes all of this possible, which is what is described in our verses.

Gathering Together (Icebreaker)

As you think of individuals you’ve read about from church history or a relative who modeled the importance of prayer for you, who stands out? Who has influenced your prayer life?

Growing Together (Truth/Equipping)

Read Ephesians 3:14-21:

1. In your own words, what would you say is the main point of this passage?
2. Many believers struggle with unanswered prayer. Perhaps they ask God to heal a loved one of cancer, for example, yet the person dies. In light of prayer promises such as we have in verses 20-21, how would you seek to counsel a friend who was struggling with unanswered prayer? Why does God sometimes say “no” to us or “wait, not now”?

3. One approach that some follow in prayer is the acronym ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. How might following such a structure be of benefit to believers?
4. Most of us are encouraged by stories of answered prayer. How does the story of Paul’s conversion and the Church’s existence provide encouragement to pray? See Galatians 1:13-16 for Paul’s conversion; Ephesians 2:14-18 for the story of the church.

Getting Real with One Another (Accessibility)

1. Have you ever experienced an answer to a specific prayer request? If so, for what did you ask God? How did it make you feel when you realized He had answered your specific concern?
2. Most of us tend to be cautious in prayer, to hold back. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being super-strong), if you were to score your prayer life on the basis of how *big* your requests are, how would you rate your prayers?
3. The Bible provides many promises on prayer. In addition to Ephesians 3:20-21, notice Matthew 7:7-11 and 1 John 5:14-15. In light of such promises, why do we tend to offer safe, predictable requests of our great God and heavenly Father?
4. In verses 14-19, Paul mentions he’s praying that God will accomplish a number of things in the lives of these believers: that they will be strengthened with power (vs.16), possess a greater closeness with Christ (vs.17), experience growth in their love, especially for others (vs.17), know in greater ways how much Christ loves them (vss.18-19), and possess a more intimate knowledge of God (vs.19). What might begin to happen in your life and in our church if your entire community group were to commit to regularly praying for these things over the course of the next few months? Are you willing to do so?

Group Prayer Time (Supplication)

In addition to the prayer concern expressed above (#4), pray also for those in our community and church who are dealing with difficulties right now. Pray also that the Lord will strengthen our love for one another.