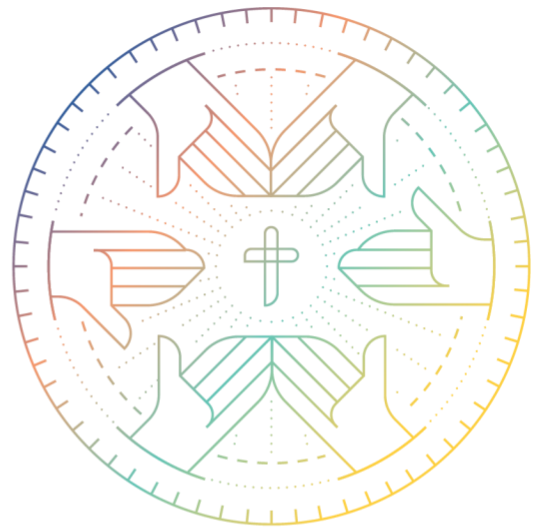


Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER



WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

This week we are continuing our series, *Give Me Strength*. In this third week, we'll talk about how prayer is important for our transformation and how there are small, but specific, spiritual practices that God can use to grow our prayer life.

- Please don't forget to take attendance via the attendance reminder email. It's important!

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

Pastor Jared talked about Jesus' first day on the job. What was your first paying job? What do you remember the most about that job?

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Was there one idea that stood out to you from Jared's message on the importance of prayer?

Read Mark 1:32-39.

Following Jesus' early morning time in prayer, he decided to leave Capernaum and go to the other surrounding towns. Does this surprise you, given how strongly people responded to him in v. 32-34? Have you ever come away from time in prayer with a sense of clarity, purpose or direction regarding some important issue in your life?

[Host Guidance: The people of Capernaum responded to Jesus with enthusiasm. The passage says the whole city was gathered at the door! If you or I were leading Jesus' ministry, we would have probably wanted to stay in Capernaum until the crowds dwindled and people lost interest. Yet Jesus didn't do that. In fact, after prayer the next morning, he told the disciples it was time to move on. Clearly, his time in prayer led him to the decision to leave Capernaum.]

INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

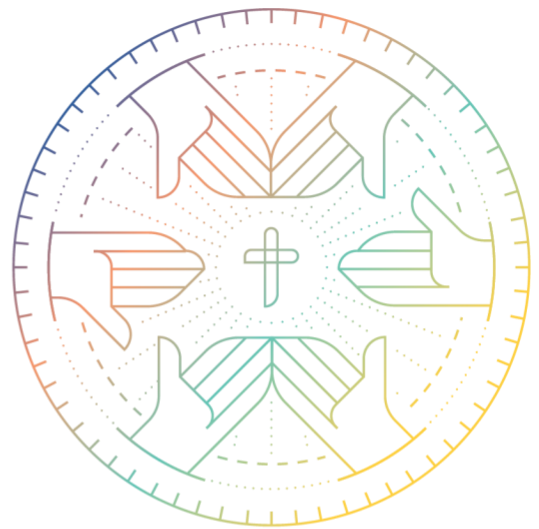
Read **Philippians 4:6-7**. Since God is omniscient (all-knowing) why do we need to present our requests to Him?

If God already knows, what is the purpose of praying?

[Host Guidance: The passage in Philippians clearly instructs us to present our requests to the Lord. God knows and cares about our trials or challenges, yet giving voice to those things through prayer invites God to share our burden and lighten our load. David Smith often says that prayer is more about us than it is about God. Prayer helps to align our heart with God's heart. Prayer shines God's light on our circumstances and situations so that we can see more clearly and understand the will of the Lord.]

Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER



What is the relationship between prayer and the peace of God?

[Host Guidance: Giving God our cares and burdens allows God to replace those burdens with his peace. He does not want us to try to carry a yoke that is too heavy for us. Out of his love for us, he desires to trade our struggle, anxiety or fear for his perfect peace. It's promises like these which inspire our love for God. (Matt. 11:28-30)]

Read Mark 14:32-36. What stands out to you about Jesus' prayer?

What do we learn about prayer from Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane?

[Host Guidance: We learn that surrender is an important part of prayer; that we are safe to express our doubts or our desire for a different answer; that we should be transparent about our anguish or our emotions (what we are feeling inside); that we can pour our heart out to God as many times as we need in order to find God's peace; that we can let trusted friends into our secret struggles; that even in the midst of anguish, we can praise God (all things are possible to you); that ultimately, we desire God's will to win out, which will be our best outcome]

Read James 5:13-16. What does this passage teach us about prayer?

[Host Guidance: We learn that prayer is a tool, meant to be used in all kinds of situations; that it's okay to cry to God in prayer when you're suffering or troubled; that the church is there to pray for you when you're sick or troubled; that sincere prayer always gets God's attention; that godliness serves to strengthen our prayer.]

APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

What is your biggest obstacle to spending time in prayer? What's one small thing you could do to remove that obstacle?

Jared talked about hurry and busyness affecting our prayer life. Has being hurried or busy been a problem for you regarding prayer? What can you do slow down or build restful margin?

As we began this series, we said, "Prayer nourishes the spiritual soil of our life, and grace grows out of that soil." How can prayer help you to grow in grace?

[Host Guidance: Prayer conditions our heart to see ourself and others through the lens of God's grace; prayer reminds us that all we have that's good is from God's gracious hand; God uses prayer to transform us and make us more gracious, more kind, more empathetic; knowing that our relationship with Jesus is received by grace, empowered by grace and sustained by grace.]

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Read Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-19. From this passage, discuss all the ways we can pray for each other. There are many!

[Host Guidance: 1) give thanks for that person; 2) that they'd grow in wisdom; 3) grow to understand God more; 4) that they'd grow in hope; 5) they'd grow to understand what they are called to be and do; 6) that they'd grasp how God wants to be powerful in our lives.]

We can always pray Scripture over someone, especially when we might not know of any specific prayer needs for that person.

As you close your small group time in prayer, have each person in your circle choose one idea from the list and use it to pray Scripture over the person to your left.