

God Hears our Prayers Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. If someone had to fill in the blank in the following sentence with one action that describes you, what would that person likely say: "He/she is *constantly* _____."
2. If you had to choose between being either extremely talented but lazy, or being extremely disciplined but with average talent, which would you choose? Why?

Read the following passage: Acts 1:14, Acts 2:1-2; Acts 4:31-37.

We see throughout the New Testament that the early church was not a perfect church! It was flawed in many ways as imperfect people gathered in community and brought their bad habits, selfishness, and prejudices with them. And yet, as they were still very much *in the process* of becoming more like Jesus in their character, they experienced God's power and presence operating within them and through them in amazing ways! The book of Acts demonstrates that this was due, in large part, to their attitude towards God and to their habit of praying often and earnestly. The early church was not a perfect church, but it was a praying church.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Based upon your observations from the verses above, how regularly were early Christians praying?
2. Read Acts 3:1; 16:30, and 2:1-2. What are some of the specific locations where early Christians were in a habit of praying? Does it seem like any of those places were unlikely candidates for this kind of spiritual activity? How can you bring a habit of prayer into more of the mundane and everyday places of your daily experiences?
3. According to Acts 4:31-37, what were some of the things that happened after they prayed? Do you think the modern church could benefit from some of these results as well? Explain.
4. What areas of your personal life or community need to experience the power and presence of God in some way? Do you believe situations and people (including you!) could change in some way from God's response to your prayers?
5. Read Matthew 6:9-13. What are some important categories of prayer expressed in the model prayer Jesus gave to his disciples?

6. At Freedom Church, we have a set of simple actions that we encourage every believer in our community to practice regularly for spiritual health. One of these practices of discipleship is called “Pray for Three.” This means to pray every day for three people who don’t yet know Jesus. Are you aware of people in your life who don’t yet know Jesus? Will you identify two or three of them right now whom you can begin to pray for each day? What might God do in your heart and their lives as you begin to faithfully bring their names before him in earnest prayer?
7. Read Acts 9:40 and Acts 21:5. In what way do the prayers of early Christian leaders like Paul and Peter reveal both humility and boldness?

Pray