

Session 5

On your knees . . .

Aim: To encourage the group to pray for themselves and those they witness to.

Objectives:

At the end of the session the group should:

Understand the importance of pray in relation to evangelism.

Recognise that prayer is not limited to evangelism!

Personally Speaking...

I generally pray in the bath. This is not always the case, particularly if I am at a church meeting. There is no real reason that it is my favourite place to pray. Maybe it has to do with cleanliness being next to Godliness.

I was probably about 12 when God told me to get serious about prayer. I'm still trying. I started off by buying a book on prayer that encouraged you to divide up the time into five minute sections and pray for specific things for each of those five minutes. This was okay for a time - I eventually got in a rut of doing it the same way every time. I went on to read other books of the 'Seven Steps to a Perfect Prayer Life' kind. I have nothing against them, they just don't suit me.

I am beginning to learn that prayer is like having a chat with God. Before I am condemned as a heretic or any other kind of thing I need to say that I am also learning that you don't approach God lightly. Being a child of the King has certain privileges, but it is best to remember who is who. In prayer I have cried and pleaded with God. I've sometimes told jokes, even though I think he may know the punch line. Prayer can be as dynamic as any conversation with an earthly friend. Some days prayer is like shouting into a bucket. As someone once said: "If God doesn't seem close, guess who moved."

I try to pray regularly for those that I know who don't know Christ, I do forget sometimes. I have seen God answers my prayers with opportunities

to talk to these people, ideas for things to send with letters and sometimes with them asking me questions before I have even got round to the subject. Prayer works and is important, it is also one of the best ways to get to know a great friend.

The Session:

Warming Up - Distractions.

You will need two volunteers and a short passage from a book (5 lines or maybe a short Psalm). You will also need a pen and piece of paper. The rest of the group will be 'distractions'. Most groups have no problem with this.

The two volunteers need to stand at opposite ends of the room from each other. One of them will be the reader, the other the listener. The rest of the group need to stand between the reader and the listener.

Tell the 'distractions' that when the reader starts to read the passage they are to make as much noise, do things (without making physical contact with either each other or the reader and listener) that will put the listener and the reader off what they are trying to do.

The listener is to try and write down what the reader reads (hence the pen and paper).

Give the reader and listener a couple of goes and see how much gets through with all of the noise and distractions.

When the group have finished explain that the session is on prayer and they have just modelled two of the problems, from our point of view, of prayer.

Firstly, when we try to talk to God (we are being the reader) we get distracted by everything and nothing. secondly, when we try and listen (the listener) we get distracted - again. Sometimes even perseverance is tough.

Over To You - Prayin'.

On the 'Prayin' handout there are different pictures which portray people's attitudes and feelings towards prayer. Use the sheet to find out what the group think about prayer. It is important not to judge their attitudes to prayer, some of them might think it is a complete waste of time. Most of them will probably have struggled with it at some time in their Christian lives. Finish the section by saying that without prayer our evangelism is powerless, then start the bible study.

The Biblical Perspective - Prayin' II.

There are loads of verses in the bible that deal with prayer. Jesus spent a lot of time in prayer talking to his Father. Jesus considered prayer to be an important part of his life. His disciples eventually caught on and asked Jesus in Luke 11 how they should pray.

Split the group up into three smaller groups and give each of the groups one of the bible verses below (use the 'Prayin' II' handout). Tell them that they will have fifteen minutes to answer the questions on the sheet and that they will need to read the verses around the given verses to get a better idea of what is going on.

Group 1: Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kind of prayers and requests. Ephesians 6:18

Group 2: I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13

Group 3: You do not have because you do not ask God. James 4:2-3

Questions:

- Who is the writer talking to?
- Why do you think the writer is saying what

they are saying?

- How does that apply to you based on your first two answers?
- How does it apply to evangelism generally?

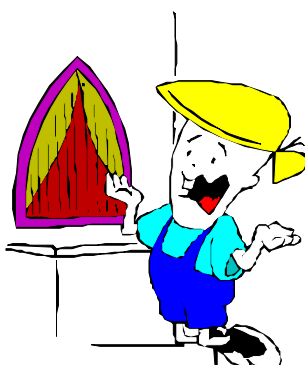
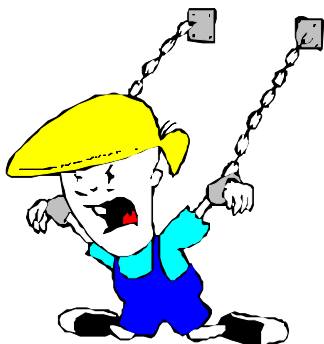
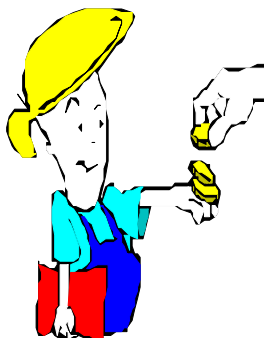
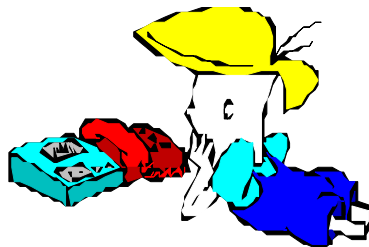
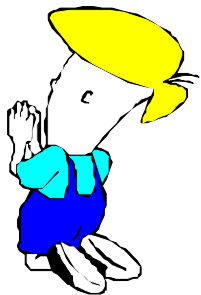
When the fifteen minutes are up get the group back together and get each group to share with the whole group their answers. Ask the whole group how they think the verses relate to the statement you made that "without prayer our evangelism is powerless".

Pulling It Together. Encourage people in the group to share any testimonies of answered prayer, again particularly in the realm of evangelism.

In drawing together this session on prayer it is worth pointing out that prayer is hard work - refer to the first game to make this point. Even though it is hard work it is something that God delights in us doing. Luke 11:10 says that whoever asks will receive, whoever seeks finds and whoever knocks, the door is opened to them. Prayer is something that God likes us to do and there are promises that go along with it. It is worth remembering though that our prayers need to be in accordance with God's will. Remember too that God answers all prayers - the answer is not always what we want though - it may be a 'No' or a 'Not yet'. If you're serious about asking God stuff in prayer, and you are not just mucking around, you can't go too far wrong. God is very kind and gracious to us! Power for evangelism is available to those who are prepared to ask.

Finish off the session by spending some time in prayer.

Prayin'



Prayin' II

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1: Who is the writer talking to?

2: Why do you think the writer is saying what they are saying?

3: How does that apply to you based on your first two answers?

4: How does it apply to evangelism generally?