



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Prayer” Series Lesson 10 – April 17, 2016

Waiting on the Lord; Fasting

### I. Lesson Starters:

Have you ever had a situation where you prayed and prayed and prayed with no apparent answer? How long is too long to wait “On the Lord” with respect to guidance? What if you do not get an answer, how are you supposed to proceed and still be in “God’s Will”?

We will break the series into multiple lessons/subject matter:

1. Why Does God want us to Pray?
2. The Effectiveness of Prayer
  - a. Does Prayer Change the Way God Acts?
  - b. Effective Prayer made possible through Jesus
  - c. Who are we supposed to pray too?
  - d. Role of Holy Spirit
3. Important Considerations for Effective Prayer
  - a. Pray “According to God’s Will”
  - b. Praying with Faith and Obedience
  - c. Forgiveness and Humility
  - d. Praying Continually and Earnestly
  - e. **Waiting on the Lord; Fasting**
  - f. What about Unanswered Prayer?
4. Praise and Thanksgiving

### II. Waiting on the Lord’s Answer:

#### Psalm 27:7-14

***7 Hear my voice when I call, Lord; be merciful to me and answer me. 8 My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, Lord, I will seek. 9 Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior. 10 Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. 11 Teach me your way, Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. 12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations. 13 I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. 14 Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.***

#### Psalm 38:13-22

***13 I am like the deaf, who cannot hear, like the mute, who cannot speak; 14 I have become like one who does not hear, whose mouth can offer no reply. 15 Lord, I wait for you; you will answer, Lord my God. 16 For I said, “Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip.” 17 For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me. 18 I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin. 19 Many have become my enemies without cause; those who hate me without reason are numerous. 20 Those who repay my good with evil lodge accusations against me, though I seek only to do what is good. 21 Lord, do not forsake me; do not be far from me, my God. 22 Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Savior.***

#### Psalm 130:5-6

***1 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; 2 Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. 3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. 5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. 6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. 7 Israel,***

***put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. 8 He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.***

In many of our prayer requests, we simply speak words to God as if the very act of voicing them, without any heartfelt involvement, will itself be an answer from God. Our prayers should be heartfelt, personal and specific. God knows our real intention, dedication and purpose. Waiting patiently for an answer shows our earnestness, sense of expectancy and respect to God.

We can feel a sense of being present with the Lord in prayer. We should pour out our requests earnestly and in respect, then wait for an answer on God's time, not ours. With that said, there are also times we pray:

- Quickly due to the need for a timely answer
- General without any specific information about a situation

### **III. Praying in Private, With Others and Fasting**

Praying Alone:

- Daniel prayed in his upper chamber three times a day in private (Dan 6:10)
- Jesus teaches us to pray in secret (Matt 6:5-6); Avoiding the error of the hypocrites
- When truly alone with God, we are more apt to pour out our real feelings and thoughts

Praying with Others

- Find strength in numbers, power (Matt 18:19-20)
- Solomon's prayer to the whole assembly of Israel (1 Kings 8:22—53)
- Learn to increase our own faith and effectiveness

Fasting and Prayer

- Fasting is often mentioned and related to prayer (Neh 1:4, Esth 4:3, Dan 9:3, Joel 2:12, Luke 2:37)
- Fasting is associated with prayer for the following:
  - Intense intercession; Repentance
  - Worship; Seeking guidance
- Fasting increases our:
  - Humility and dependence
  - Gives more attention to prayer
  - Personal sacrifice and a reminder to let go of all to Jesus
  - Exercise of self-discipline
  - Heightens spiritual and mental alertness, sense of God's presence

### **IV. Group Questions:**

1. List the main themes or reasons in the Psalm scriptures above that we should be waiting on the Lord's answers in our prayers?
2. Do you agree with the statement "the more fervent and heartfelt our prayers are with God, the more likely God will answer"? Explain why or why not? Compare and contrast to quick, shallow or general prayers?
3. What are the main concerns or issues we should be careful about when praying in public? Can people effectively pray in public or with groups if they do not have an active private prayer life?
4. Have you fasted? Be open and discuss what this did for your prayers, relationship and spiritual awareness; both pluses and minuses?
5. What if you do not get an answer, how are you supposed to proceed and still be in "God's Will"?