

# Finding Joy in our Prayer

## Week 5 - Praying through Study and Bible Groups

I hope you are enjoying this separate blog series on finding joy in our prayer life, this week I'm looking at praying through study and bible groups, which I know many of you will have been involved in down the years, a homegroup or a group that meets in church or even one that meets online, like our Rule of Life group that emerged in COVID to help us through those strange times that now seem a lifetime away when we could not meet directly with one another and worship in communion with others.

Bible reading and prayer are as important to our spiritual health as food and water are to our physical health. As Christians and faithful followers of the Christian message, we are called to learn, to understand, and to put into practice what God teaches us in His Word about prayer. It is important that we take the time to read, to digest, and to absorb the Scriptures, to take time to carefully read and think about them. Meditate on them and the truths they teach which are not always immediately apparent.

We should Regularly ask God for a right understanding of Scriptural truths and then make them part of our lives by learning to love God and His Word. We do this through committing ourselves to making Biblical truths the foundation of our lives and to putting them into practice every day of your life. The wonderful words of scripture are not there to be learned parrot-fashion, but to jump off the dusty pages of our bibles to inspire us to live them for ourselves and apply them in our relationships with all who we meet, even if some we encounter are awkward, obstructive, hostile or rude.

Psalms 139:23-24 is a prayer. As you seek to better understand and put into practice what God teaches about prayer, it would be good to regularly pray this prayer.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

If we do not make the Word of God an ongoing part of our lives, we will be spiritually weak and ineffective.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. John 15:7 Abiding in the Word of God is a key to

answered prayer. Going through any study of prayer will do little, if any, good if we are not regularly absorbing the Word of God and applying it.

No Christian will ever be stronger than their pattern of absorbing and applying sound Biblical truth, and no Christian will ever be stronger than his prayer life. These are yardsticks of our walk with God. We can be a “good” person, regularly participate in all the meetings at church, teach Sunday School, and we can even be a well-known teacher or preacher, goodness even a Lay Reader, but if we are not regularly absorbing the Word of God and if we have not developed Biblical patterns of prayer, there will be little or no genuine spiritual growth and there will be little of the fruit of the Spirit in our life.

Sounds rigorously harsh but be encouraged. Homegroups are re-emerging out of COVID, normality is returning, we are blessed by the joy of being able to meet in groups for prayer and worship again. We can learn from one another, be collectively inspired by sharing God’s word and the joy of meeting, whilst also having the option to meet online for those still struggling. God did not design us to be spiritual hermits. We need each other. We need to meet together to learn, to serve, to encourage and build up our fellow believers, and to be encouraged and built up ourselves. When we fail to consistently meet with fellow believers, we are literally less than the sum of our parts. One thing is very clear from the Word of God. God instructs us to pray, and He promises positive answers to our prayers. We must respond with grace, humility and love, to be open to Gods word speaking to us in unexpected ways and be inspired and encouraged in the meaningful fun and collective joy that shared study and reading can bring us all.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, ... Colossians 3:16.

Amen.

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Reader.