

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 27th September 2015

USING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO GOD'S GLORY

As We Gather

Prayer is a privilege given to God's children. We can approach His throne freely and boldly to share our needs with Him.

Reading Scripture JAMES 5 : 13 – 20

Thinking together

There is no problem too great and no circumstances too difficult for God. He will always provide a solution / way out, if we trust Him (Psalm 124:7-8).

Do you sometimes feel trapped / overwhelmed by events / circumstances? Discuss

James continues his letter to practicing Christians by encouraging prayer, using four situations in which God answers prayer

- Prayer for the suffering [James 5:13]
As we go through life we often experience difficulties that are not the result of sin or of God's discipline. Instead of complaining about the situation, mature Christians are prayerful in life's troubles and talk to God.

What can prayer do? Discuss (see 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 and James 1:5-6)

Not everyone bears troubles in the same way, but the mature believer knows how to sing while suffering (Job 35:9-11 and Acts 16:23-25).

Praying and singing as part of worship are expressions of our inner spiritual life (Ephesians 5:18b + 20 and Colossians 3:16).

- Prayer for the sick [James 5:14-16]
We cannot separate the spiritual from the physical and social, and a right relationship with God is a prerequisite of health in every part of a person's life and being.

**What does James advocate should be done to bring about healing? Discuss
(see also 1 John 1:6-10 and 1 John 4:13-18)**

**What is the 'prayer of faith' and who prays this prayer? Discuss
(see also Romans 8:26 and 1John 5:14-15)**

Lessons for us are –

- Disobedience to God can lead to sickness (Psalm 32)
- Sin affects the whole church
- There is healing when sin has been dealt with (Proverbs 28:13)
- Confessions should be made first to God and then to the person affected by our sin.

- Prayer for the nation [James 5:17-18]

Prayer is getting God's will done in earth (see 1 Kings 17-18 for background). Prayer power is the greatest power in the world today. We need to pray that God will bring conviction and revival to our nation. One of the first responsibilities of the local church is to pray for government leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

What is the difference between repetitious prayer and persistent prayer? Discuss

- Prayer for the backslider / straying [James 5:19-20]

The Christian who "wanders" from the truth – Word of God, through backsliding or erroneous interpretation / application of the Word is in a dangerous position, as is the church (see Ecclesiastes 9:13 Hebrews 2:1 Hebrews 12 1 John 5:16-17).

**What is our individual and corporate responsibility in such instances? Discuss
(see also Luke 22:39-41 Ephesians 4:1-5 1 Peter 4:8)**

In Closing

Throughout his letter James has emphasised spiritual maturity. Below are some questions you can use to examine your heart and assess your own maturity

1. Am I becoming more and more patient in the testings of life?
2. Do I play with temptation or resist it from the start?
3. Do I find joy in obeying the Word of God, or do I merely study it and learn it?
4. Are there any prejudices that shackle me?
5. Am I able to control my tongue?
6. Am I a peacemaker rather than a troublemaker? Do people come to me for spiritual wisdom?
7. Am I a friend of God or a friend of the world?
8. Do I make plans without considering the will of God?
9. Am I selfish when it comes to money? Am I unfaithful in the paying of my bills?
10. Do I naturally depend on prayer when I find myself in some kind of trouble?
11. Am I the kind of person others seek for prayer support?
12. What is my attitude towards the 'wandering' brother/ sister? Do I criticise and gossip, or do I seek to restore him /her in love?

Don't just grow old – grow up!

