

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 8th May 2016

THE EASTER SEASON – PRAYER OF JESUS

As we Gather

Chapter 17 of John's Gospel records Jesus' prayer the last time He was with His disciples before His suffering on the Cross.

Reading Scripture **John 17:20-26** see also **Acts 16:16-34** **Psalm 97** **Revelation 22:12-21**

Thinking Together

Jesus never lost His faith in God or His confidence in human beings; and His prayer reflects this as He prayed first for Himself with the Cross ahead of Him, then for His close disciples, and finally for all future disciples – including us.

Why did Jesus pray this prayer? Discuss
(Hebrews 12:1-3 1 John 2:28 – 3:3 & 3:18 Acts 16:16-34)

Jesus prayed for unity among believers, based on unity with Him and the Father. It is this unity which makes Christians different, and is a powerful witness to the reality of God's love as it transcends ethnic, cultural and religious differences (John 17:20-23 Acts 16:16-34 Psalm 97:10-12 Revelation 22:12-14)

What kind of unity did Jesus pray for? Discuss

How is this unity violated in the family? in the Church? Discuss

He also prayed for protection of His disciples from the evil one. (Ephesians 6:11 John 17:15 and Revelation 22:12-21)

Jesus told His Father that He had given His disciples the glory which the Father had given Him, and that He wanted all believers to see His glory in the heavenly places (John 17:22 +24 Romans 8:29 2 Timothy 2:10-12 1 Corinthians 13:12)

What was Christ's glory? Discuss

How do we know Christians go to heaven? Discuss
(1Thessalonians 5:9-10 John 14:1-6 John 17:14)

Our glory occurs when others see in us the reflection of Christ / God in the service we give them and the love that we share with them (Matthew 5:16 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and John 17:25-26).

What is the importance of truth and love in the Church? Discuss
(Ephesians 2:15 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 and Philippians 1:9-10)

In Closing

All true believers have God's glory (Holy Spirit) within, so we must look beyond the elements of our first birth and build our fellowship (relationships) on the essentials of our new birth in Christ.

From Jesus' prayer we can see that the spiritual priorities of our Lord, as demonstrated in His relationship with His Father, and His teachings, healings and sacrifice, are

- The glory of God
- The sanctity of God's people
- The unity of the Church
- The ministry of sharing the Gospel

What are your spiritual priorities?

PRAYER

Triune God,

Jesus prayed that we might be one.

Help us to transcend our differences and find our unity in Jesus Christ, our Lord – who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen