

Sermon Based Small Group Guide

February, 11 2018 sermon:

The Power of a Praying Church: "When God says no"

Warm up: (15-20 minutes)

God answers prayer – but there are thousands of reasons why God might say “No” to some prayers. For example, God says “No” when He has a bigger perspective, when He has a better plan, and when He has a greater purpose. What should we do when God says “No”? We should trust that God does everything out of goodness and love, pray what Jesus prayed facing the cross when we’re in pain, and expect God to give His grace to handle His answer. Let’s Talk It Over!

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

1. Read Jeremiah 33:3. What does this verse tell us about God’s heart for prayer? Does this verse tell us that God will always answer in the way we expect? If we’re not getting what we ask for – that’s an answer, too!
2. Read Hebrews 4:13. How can this verse help explain why God may have said “Wait,” “Grow,” or “No” to one of your prayers?
3. Think of a time where you prayed for something that God did not give you. Then read Proverbs 2:8 and discuss in your group why it was better this way or how something else he gave you instead far outweighed what you asked for.
4. Open your Bible and read 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 aloud. God sometimes says “No” when He has a greater purpose. Paul notes that our present troubles which will soon be over produce in us immeasurably great glory that will last forever! Read 1 Peter 1:7. What does it say about the purpose of our troubles? How have your troubles helped you grow?
5. Psalms 25:10 (NIV) says that *"All the ways of the Lord are loving . . ."* When God says “No”, we should trust that God does everything out of goodness and love. What does Paul say about this in Romans 8:28? Discuss.
6. Read Mark 14:35-36 in your Bible and mark the text where Jesus asks that he not suffer what was ahead of him. Discuss in your group why Jesus did this and outline the model He used when He: (1) Affirms God’s power, (2) Asks with passion, and then (3) Accepts God’s plan. Discuss what is surprising about this to you. When might you pray this way?

Application: Is there someone in your group that is going through an especially difficult time? Would you surround and support them in prayer as you close. God is with you!