

A TIME OF MINISTRY (serving others)

Last week you were challenged to pray for a particular ministry within the Church. In this next week find a way to physically help that ministry. Spend some time sharing which ministry you are concentrating on.

A TIME OF EVANGELISM (sharing Jesus)

Last week you were asked to pray for an individual or agency in the community as a way to reach out. In this next week find a way to physically help that individual or agency.

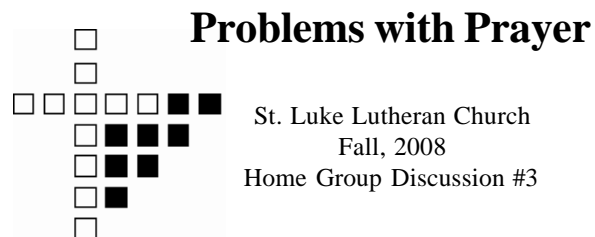
CLOSING PRAYER

In your closing prayer please pray for our nation as we approach a time of national election.

CYBER CONVERSATION ABOUT PRAYER

All are invited to join in an online conversation about the book Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference. Copies of the book are available at the Sign In Center at church or from a local book store.

Go to our web site for more information.
www.stlukehas.com/chat



Problems with Prayer

St. Luke Lutheran Church
Fall, 2008
Home Group Discussion #3

Encouragement for Greater Involvement in Prayer

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

This four part study is designed to do two things.

First, it serves to help us continue in a “life on purpose.” Each session will accent five purposes in life:

Worship: live to please God

Fellowship: be connected into God’s family

Discipleship: become like Jesus

Ministry: serve others

Evangelism: share Jesus

Second, it leads participants into a discussion on various prayer issues. Good communication is crucial to any relationship—that includes our relationship with God! A robust prayer life helps our relationship with God flourish.

A TIME OF FELLOWSHIP (connected to one another)

Share with one another what you are thinking about your prayer life as we begin our third session.

Share with one another any answers to prayer you have received in the last week.

A TIME OF WORSHIP (pleasing God)

Talk about an attribute of God that is especially important to you right now. Don't take the obvious one— choose something besides love.

Taking turns reading a verse, have the group read out loud Psalm 41.

Spend some time in prayer praising God for his various attributes

A TIME OF DISCIPLESHIP (becoming like Jesus)

“Jesus... went off to a solitary place where he prayed.” Mark 1:35

A PROBLEM WITH PRAYER: WHY DOESN'T IT WORK?!

Tonight we are going to think through what difference prayer makes.

Discuss this statement, “One of the problems I have with prayer is that *it doesn't make any difference.*”

VIEW THE SECOND DVD SEGMENT

You have heard it said, “God answers every prayer with a yes, no or wait awhile.” Do you think that is true? Do you think that is helpful?

The only final solution to unanswered prayer is Paul's explanation to the Corinthians, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” No human being, no matter how wise or how spiritual, can interpret the ways of God, explaining why one miracle and not another, why an apparent intervention here and not there. Along with the apostle Paul, we can only wait, and trust. Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference? p. 247

Discuss the sentiment shared by Philip Yancy. How does it square with Matthew 7:7-8?

Read each of the following pair of passages. How is each prayer answered or not answered? How does that help you think about prayer “not working?”

- Exodus 2:23-25 then 3:7-10
- II Samuel 12:15-17 then 12:18-24
- I Kings 19:1-5 then 19:5-7
- Matthew 26:39 then 27:32-39
- Luke 22:32 then John 18:15-17, 25-27
- II Corinthians 12:7-8 then 12:9

Look at the following passages. How do they help you to deal with “unanswered” prayer?

- Psalm 27:14
- Psalm 37:7
- Romans 8:18, 22-25
- Galatians 6:9

There is something called the *Law of Unintended Consequences*. The idea is that whenever you make a change, other changes that you did not anticipate will invariably take place.

How does that concept apply to prayer? Consider this remark, “I had been praying urgently for a better job. Then the economy went on the skids, and I got so I was just thankful to have the job I had! Still, God never did answer my prayer.” Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?

From tonight's conversation what will you take home with you about whether or not prayer works?