
ENABLE 2.1

**Minds on Things Above
Small Group Session Five
Week Beginning 28th October**



School of Prayer

Welcome back after our half term break last week. You may well remember that ENABLE is all about exploring the wonderful 'means' that God has given us so that we can serve Him with the whole of our lives.

Last term, we were exploring the great enabler that is 'one another' - God has placed us in the church that we might support and encourage one another in living for Him. Over the first part of this course, we looked at the book of Revelation and explored what it looks like to be the church that God would have us be.

Now, for the second half of this term, we come to the second our enablers - the wonderful gift of prayer. For the next four sessions (see timetable on page four of each study) we are going to be thinking about prayer together.

Whilst prayer is a wonderful gift to the church, I know that introducing this topic can raise different questions and feelings in us. We all tend to feel guilty when it comes to prayer - after all we could always pray more! We can feel inadequate, which of us would say we have mastered prayer?

The topic can also introduce some deep questions about the nature of the world itself. After all, if God is really in-charge won't He just do what He wants to do, regardless of what we pray? Does prayer really change things? What about when we pray for things that seem so obviously good, yet it seems like our prayers are not answered?

Despite all these thoughts, there is also a sense that prayer is the most natural thing in the world. Many people, when in trouble, will find themselves just instinctively praying.

Well then, over the next four sessions, we are going to explore the wonderful blessing of prayer. Each week, we are going to look at a different prayer in the New Testament and ask how it can instruct us. Welcome to the School of Prayer.

It was at this time that Jesus went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

Luke 6:12

The Framework of Prayer

1 Giving Thanks

At the start of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians he tells them about his prayers for them. First he gives thanks (2 Thessalonians 1:3-4) and then he prays for them (1:11-12).

*When you pray, do you find yourself spending time giving thanks - why/why not?
When you give thanks, what kind of things do you give thanks for? Jot down your answers.*

Now read 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4. Then jot down the different things Paul gives thanks for.

In what ways is the content of this thanksgiving prayer different from our own thanksgiving prayers? Why do you think it might be different?

What different things we can learn from this prayer of thanksgiving.

It seems like Paul cherishes the things that are of eternal significance in the lives of the Thessalonians. He cherishes the signs of grace in their lives. Think for a moment together about what our prayers would look like if we prayed like that. *What might it look like if we routinely thanked God for the different signs of grace in the lives of others in our church? What might it look like to do that for one another in your group?*

2 Praying for you

Having given thanks, Paul now turns to pray for the Thessalonians. Let's ask the same questions we asked about our thanksgiving, but this time about our prayers...

When you pray, what kind of things do you pray for? Jot down your answers.

Now read 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. Then jot down the different things Paul prays for. *What do each of Paul's prayers mean? What is the ultimate goal of Paul's prayer?*

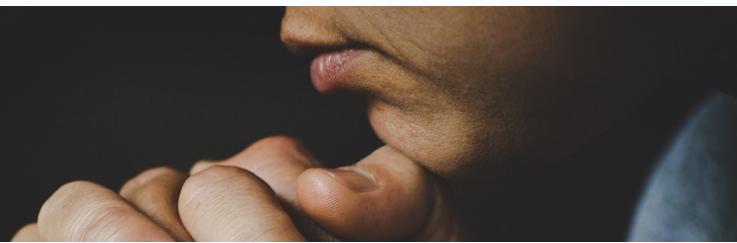
In what ways is the content of this prayer different from our own prayers? Why do you think it might be different?

What different things we can learn from the content of this prayer?

Like the prayer of thanksgiving, this prayer cherishes things that are of eternal significance. Not our here and now concerns, but the way we live for Christ and the prospering by God of our good desires that come from our faith - and it is all for His glory (and ours!). *What might it look like if we routinely prayed in this way for one another in our church or in your group? What might happen as a result of these prayers?*

3 Prayer

Having looked at prayer it would be ironic if we didn't now have time to pray together. You might like to list down some things to give thanks for in each other - gifts of grace. Then why not list some things you might pray for each other - things of eternal significance. Having done that - spend some time in prayer together.





Autumn Term Timetable

Introducing ENABLE - Central Meeting

7:30pm Thursday 7th September

Small Group Session 1.1

Week beginning 10th September

Prayer Meeting Week

7:00pm Trinity-wide hosted at All Hallows - 20th September

Small Group Session 1.2

Week beginning 24th September

Small Group Session 1.3

Week beginning 1st October

Small Group Session 1.4

Week beginning 8th October

Prayer Meeting Week

7:30pm 18th/19th October

Half Term Break - Week beginning 22nd October

Small Group Session 2.1

Week beginning 29th October

Small Group Session 2.2

Week beginning 5th November

Prayer Meeting Week

7:30pm 15th/16th November

Small Group Session 2.3

Week beginning 19th November

Small Group Session 2.4

Week beginning 26th November

ENABLE into Action - Group Activities

Week beginning 3rd December

support and
encouragement
to live for Jesus