Corps Resources *for small groups*

FOUNDATIONS IN PRAYER

SESSION TWO HOW LONG SHOULD WE KEEP PRAYING?

God doesn't always instantly answer our prayers. Sometimes we think that means he doesn't want to answer our prayer. Maybe there was something wrong with what we asked. However, there are many times when we are praying directly in line with God's will, and the answer still doesn't seem to come. What would God have us do in that situation?

In the book of Daniel, there is a story of Daniel fasting and praying for 21 days. He is finally visited by an angel who tells him, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia" (Daniel 10:12–13 ESV). The prince of Persia was an evil spiritual being who stopped the angel from delivering the message to Daniel from God. The arch-angel Michael had to intervene so that the message could get through. Lack of answer to prayer therefore does not necessarily mean that we have not been heard or that God is unwilling to answer. Sometimes it takes some time for the answer to cut through the spiritual forces of evil. So then, how long should we keep praying?

{notes}

QUESTIONS

Read: Isaiah 62:6-7

1. What are key aspects of the role of watchmen in this passage? What are they to do? How frequently are they to do it?
2. How do you feel about the "earthiness" of establishing Jerusalem? What does this tell us about the place of prayer in political situations?
3. If the Jews were supposed to pray night and day for the establishment of Jerusalem (as God had promised that he would establish it), how much more should Christians pray for the establishment of God's kingdom "on earth as it is in heaven"?
4. How seriously do you think God takes prayer? What does the image of "getting no rest, and giving God no rest" tell you about the importance of continued prayer?

Read: Luke 18:1-8

5. What does verse 1 tell us is the purpose of this parable? What are we supposed to learn?
6. Why do you think Jesus compares his Father with an unjust judge? What is the contrast supposed to highlight?
7. What is the subject of the prayer that this parable highlights? What does this tell us about the things that God would like us to pray about?
8. Why do you think that Jesus ends this teaching by saying "when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (verse 8)? Why do you think Jesus links persistent prayer with faith?