Corps Resources
for small groups

FOUNDATIONS IN PRAYER

SESSION FIVE JESUS' GETHSEMANE PRAYER

Sometimes there can be a belief in the church that the Christian life should go completely smoothly, that we should always be happy, full of joy, laughing and smiling. However, there are many times when we have to deal with really difficult circumstances. If we have bought into the always happy vision of Christianity, it can then be difficult to know how God fits in the picture of our suffering. We wonder where God has gone, has he abandoned us? However the bible is full of prayers of lament, that acknowledge God and call him into situations of great stress and difficulty.

For example, the Psalms are full of prayers of lament. Lament is a prayer that comes out deep distress. They cry out to God, giving full details of the problem that is upsetting the psalmist. They include statements of trust in God despite the circumstances, and call on God to help. They then usually end in praise or a vow of praise when God has acted to redeem the psalmist from his circumstances. In the garden of Gethsemane we even have an example of Jesus lamenting and also at the same time teaching his disciples about prayer!

{notes}

QUESTIONS

Read: Mark 14:32-42

1. How do you feel about the difficulty Jesus had in going to the cross? Can you imagine if you were in the same position, how would you feel about what God was calling you to do?
2. This passage describes Jesus' emotional state as greatly distressed and troubled, very sorrowful. Share some times where you have felt this way. Where did you feel that God was in your situation?
3. Jesus addresses God as "Abba, Father". Abba is Aramaic and is closer to "Dad" or "Daddy" in meaning. What do you think this says about Jesus' trust in God despite his circumstances?
4. When you are in difficult circumstances do you see God more as a distant dictatorial father or a warm kind daddy who you can run to for comfort?
5. What can we learn from Jesus surrendering to God's will even though he really did not like what was going to happen? How does this fit with an understanding of the Father as one who wants to comfort us?
6. What does Jesus teach his disciples about prayer in this passage (verse 38)? What principle does this establish in terms of something we should pray regularly for ourselves, particularly when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances?