



## HOMEGROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pray for the Holy Spirit to give your group wisdom and understanding and then Read James 5:13-18

### **Kid's question:**

- 1) *When do you usually pray? At church, at meals, before bed, etc...*
- 2) *Have you ever asked for someone to pray for you when you were feeling sick. If yes, What happened?*

### **For the whole group:**

- 1) *Under what circumstances do you tend to engage in prayer? What about praise, When do you tend to praise God and what does it look like?*
- 2) *Have you ever asked the elders of a church to pray for you? If no, why not? If yes, did they anoint you with oil? What happened?*
- 3) *In Matthew 17:19-20 Jesus says that faith the size of a mustard seed is enough to move a mountain. What do you think the relationship is between faith and prayer? Have you ever prayed with faith for something and not seen it happen? What did you conclude? **\* This has the potential to be a hot topic, regardless it is healthy for us as fellow Christians to share our experience and what we understand God's Word to teach. Please be respectful of those in your group as they share their experience and understanding of this. I suggest reading the commentary out loud for day three in this study for some thoughts to ponder as a group before your discussion.***
- 4) *What about taking action? James instructs us to pray for one another so that we may be healed.(verse 16) Is anyone in your group suffering from sickness of any kind? Why not take time right now to pray for them!*

# DAY ONE

## Read James 5:13

As James draws his letter to a close he focuses attention on the subject of prayer. A fitting way to end a letter where he has challenged his readers to step into a living and active faith in God. In verse 13 we see an encouragement to approach God in the circumstances of our lives, whether that is in a season of suffering or in the midst of our cheerfulness. We are to be real with God. We can walk with God in our suffering, ask for His intervention as well as the strength to stand up under it. James use of the word “suffering” in this verse is likely referring to a wide variety of trials that one might face in life. God wants to be intimately involved in our lives. As we see here, there is also an encouragement to praise God from the well of joy within us and to do it through singing. You may even find times where you are experiencing some sort of suffering but in the midst of it are able to both seek the Lord regarding your suffering and also praise Him from your heart of gratitude for who He is to you in the midst of your trial.

## REFLECT

- *Take some time and reflect on what usually prompts you toward prayer/communication with God in your life? Is it a difficult circumstance? A blessing that comes your way? A desire to connect with God? A question that you want or need God to answer?*

## RESPOND

- *Is there a trial you are going through currently? Take James’ instruction to heart and pray to God right now about that trial. Let His Spirit lead you and pray what is on your heart regarding the difficulty you are facing. Let God in to your inner struggles with that circumstance. Sometimes journaling your prayer can be a powerful way to express your heart to God and gives a record for you to reflect on later.*
- *What about praise? Do you sing to the Lord outside of Sunday morning worship at church? I find it helpful to sing out to God throughout my week. There is something about talking to God through music that releases the joy in our hearts. Try it! God doesn’t mind if you sing off key, He loves to hear His children singing out their thankfulness and praise to Him. Don’t hold your breath till Sunday—Sing throughout your day!*

## Psalm 92:1-2

***“It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,”*** NIV

# DAY TWO

## Read James 5:14

James asks a clear question in this verse and then gives an answer so that the believers would know what an appropriate action would be. Some might use this verse to say that only elders are supposed to pray for the sick but we can see clearly even from verse 16 that we are encouraged to pray for one another for healing. Elders are spiritually mature believers who have been called by God to shepherd the flock, to help encourage and guide the church to follow God and grow in faith. It is fitting then that James would encourage those who are sick to reach out to elders and request prayer for their situation. This, however, should not hinder each of us from also following the command to pray for one another as we see the need. Another part of James instruction is for the elders to anoint the sick person with oil. Some scholars understand this to be a medicinal use of oil for the sick person. One problem with this thought is that oil was not a remedy for every sickness that would be encountered. Furthermore there is no apparent significance in having the spiritual leaders in the church apply oil if it was simply a medicinal application. Anointing in scripture was often the act of setting something apart for God's use and purpose. See Exodus 28:41, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Hebrews 1:9. Though no explanation is given by James for the meaning of his instruction, it is likely that it was a symbolic act as in other examples we see in scripture of anointing, demonstrating that the person being prayed for is being set apart to God for the focus of His healing power in their situation.

I have served in churches as an elder for a total of nearly 14 years now. Over the course of those years I have had the honor of praying for people with physical illnesses. I have seen God heal people miraculously. I do not know why but I don't always see physical healing take place. However I choose to make no conclusions based on what I do not understand. I believe that God can and does heal and therefore I will continue to pray for it and seek prayer when I am ill. I trust God with the outcome and believe that many of the answers to our questions will come with time, either now or when we are with God in eternity.

## REFLECT

- *Have you ever asked the elders of the church to pray for your physical healing?*
- *If not, what is the main reason you have not?*

## RESPOND

- *Is there something you are facing right now that you would like to have the elders pray over you about? This could be a physical illness, a spiritual struggle, direction you are seeking from God for a decision? I encourage you to step into this instruction given from James, God is delighted when we trust His word and His power to change circumstances. The elders at Adventure Church are—BJ Hillabush, Stanley Schubert, Jon Griffin and Jeff Hansen. Feel free to reach out to any one of us to set up a time where we can pray for you. If you need a contact, send me an email at [Jeffh@adventureduvall.com](mailto:Jeffh@adventureduvall.com)*

# DAY THREE

## Read James 5:15

Notice it is a prayer of faith that makes the sick person well. Often much confusion swirls around the relationship of faith and healing. Some people agonize over the loss of a loved one for whom they prayed but did not see physical healing. "Did I not have enough faith?" they ask themselves. Jesus taught that faith the size of a mustard seed was all that was required to tell a mountain to move. (Matthew 17:19-20) Apparently it isn't about the size of our faith but rather the power of our God to move through it. When we focus on whether we have enough faith we focus on our own effort. In verse 15 James makes it clear that it is the prayer offered in faith that makes the sick person well. He also points out that it is the Lord who will raise him up. A longer conversation could be had here regarding the question "Is it always God's will to heal?" For now, I make this observation; So far I do not see physical healing occur in every circumstance that I pray for. Rather than make conclusions off of what we observe I think it best to pray with faith and trust God with the outcome. I have confidence that God's will is best and therefore if I pray for healing with a faith that believes God can do it and I persist in prayer, in the end I can trust Him with the results even if it might not make sense to me now.

James also says that if the sick person has sinned he will be forgiven. Key word here is "if". James does not assume that all sickness is caused by sin and neither should we. At the same time, the confession of sin to a trusted person can take a tremendous load off of ones heart, mind and body. It is a big step in the journey of repentance and can lead to health and freedom both physically and in our spiritual walk with God.

## REFLECT

- *How do you view faith in relationship to prayer for healing? If you haven't already, take some time to read Matthew 17:19-20 What do you think Jesus is teaching us about faith here?*
- *Can you think of a circumstance where you felt like it was your lack of faith that prevented breakthrough?*

## RESPOND

- *If you were able to identify a time where you attributed your lack of faith to a prayer not being answered this would be a great time to take that event before the Lord. Before listening to God I suggest praying out loud to silence the voice of the enemy and give permission only to the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Pray something like this and then journal what you sense God is saying to you:  
"Father, please help me understand how my faith relates to my prayers, I want to be in a place where I pray with faith and trust you with the outcome. I believe that what you desire is best and I also believe that you have invited me to play a critical role in how events unfold by my praying. What do you want to say to me about my feelings of lacking faith in prayer? Is there something you want to say regarding your heart for me in the circumstance that came to my mind in the 'reflect' section?"*

# DAY FOUR

## Read James 5:16

Here in verse 16 James affirms the importance of the body of Christ. On occasion I come across a person who questions the importance of joining in a church community. “Why can’t I just read my bible at home, listen to some sermons online and pray to God on my own?” Actually that is what I said when I first came to Christ. We didn’t have online sermons back then but I listened to radio preachers. James touches on an important point here that is strongly supported throughout the New Testament—We are supposed to function as a close community. Confessing our sins to each other brings God’s light into our choices and invites support in the process of repentance and living in a new way. If we have sinned against someone and confess to them it can start the process of forgiveness and restoration. James also emphasizes the importance of praying for each other so that we may be healed. We each have the responsibility and privilege of praying for one another. James encourages the church that a righteous man’s prayers are powerful and effective. It’s been almost 24 years since I received Christ, since those early days of trying to be a lone ranger in my faith I have experienced the power of community in the Body of Christ. Countless times I have been able to seek prayer from fellow believers and see its effect. I have confessed my sins to others and seen chains broken in my life. I have been able to pray for others and see miracles happen. I also have had others confess sin to me and been able to pray with them to see break through in their walk with God. Community is God’s design and James supports this truth in our verse today.

### REFLECT

- *What value do you place on the community of believers that you participate in?*
- *Would you say that you are a part of your church community at the level of being able to confess areas of sin and struggle, seeking prayer, and praying for others?*

### RESPOND

- *If you do not have close relationships in the church community, relationships where you feel able to confess the things you struggle with and seek prayer for healing, I want to challenge you to ask the question, “Why not?” This is God’s design for you, to have a strong community to invest in. Great relationships can start as you take small steps toward others. We have regular homegroups that meet weekly. This is a great place to start building closer relationships with your church family. To get more information about joining a homegroup send an email to: [info@adventurecommunitychurch.com](mailto:info@adventurecommunitychurch.com)*

# DAY FIVE

## Read James 5:17-18

This is an important point that James makes here as it relates to the subject of how we view the stories of scripture. A critical aspect of our approach to the Bible is answering the question, “Is the Bible a book of exceptions or a book of examples?” If we conclude that it is a book of exceptions, of extraordinary people who accomplished amazing things through a unique and unparalleled relationship with God, then we may naturally approach the stories of the Bible as unapplicable to our daily lives. However if we see the stories as examples of what it looks like for people just like us to walk with our living God, then we will be able to apply what we learn about God’s interactions with people to our every day lives. James supports this approach to scripture as he highlights a story from Elijah’s life. It is significant that James brings Elijah’s character down to earth when he says that he “was a man with a nature like ours”. To be sure, Elijah was a righteous man who loved God whole heartedly, but the encouragement is that he was not different in nature than you and me. We can see God do incredible things as we too walk with God whole heartedly!

You can read Elijah’s story of praying about the rain in 1 King’s chapters 17 and 18. We see that Elijah prayed in faith and according to God’s will, for God told him that He would send the rain (1 Kings 18:1). He also was persistent in prayer, believing what God said He would do. He sent his servant back 7 times to check for rain clouds before a cloud began to appear.

### REFLECT

- *Being totally honest, do you feel like the characters in the Bible are exceptions or the example of what life with God can be like for you? Why or why not?*

### RESPOND

- *James shares the example of Elijah in the context of encouraging us to pray for one another with faith. Is there a situation in your life or in the life of someone close to you that you can seek God for right now? Maybe God will move your heart to call that person or get together with them to pray. I believe there is much we could see God doing but because of His heart to involve us in His mission, He waits for us to seek Him in prayer!*

# DAY SIX

## Read James 5:13-18

Today is a day for review and application. In this week's passage James draws close to the end of his letter with an encouragement for us to press in to prayer. And so I put the question out to you; Through this week's study of James have you pressed in deeper to prayer and fellowship?

- Maybe that looks like making contact with a homegroup so that you can start building deeper relationships.
- Perhaps you have a prayer request and God is prompting you to call the elders to pray for you.
- Or maybe you want to start listening for God's prompting to pray for others. Just this week a teenager from our church shared with me how she felt God was leading her to ask the gas station clerk if there was anything she could pray for her. This brave teen obeyed and was able to encourage the clerk by stepping out in obedience and faith. Even though the clerk did not share a prayer request she was encouraged by someone carrying enough to ask.

Don't let this weeks study go by without taking action. Spend some time today journaling the things God spoke to you this week through the passage in James and this study. Ask God for one action step that you can take to move you into living more and more of the truth of God's word in James 5:13-18

Be blessed as you walk in living faith!