

Perseverance in Prayer

Cell Group material for w/c 22.1.2006

Beginning

Think back to your childhood. Can you recall asking for something you really wanted – a bike, a puppy, a baby brother/sister? Who did you ask – your parents, Father Christmas, the Great Pumpkin (if you were a “Peanuts” fan) ? How long did you ask for? Did you receive it/him/her? If you did –why did whoever give it to you? If not-how did you feel at the time and can you see a reason now why your “prayer” was not answered?

Continuing

What do you understand by the words “persistence” and “perseverance”? What images come into your mind?

One meaning of “persists” implies repeated behaviour: a habit. How did this work out with Daniel’s prayer life? **Daniel 6: 10-12**. Remember Daniel was an old man when this incident took place – how was he prepared for the pressure?

Another meaning implies “repetition”. How does the parable of the widow and the judge illustrate this? **Luke 18: 1-8**. What is the difference between God and the judge? Can you think of any other verses that indicate how God feels about our needs?

Sometimes “persistence” suggests a continued flow of activity – “the persistent beating of the waves on the rocky shore. What does **John 15:15-16** say about our ongoing relationship with God and how should this affect our prayer life?

We often think of persistence and perseverance in terms of “keeping going against the odds”. How do we pray when things are difficult and we do not even know what to pray for? Does **James 1:2-8** help?

Constructing

How do we develop the habit and stamina for prayer as it seems to be talked about in the Bible? Think about Jesus’ prayer life? Does it give us pointers that help?

Think about your own prayer life. What happens in it, in terms of how you pray and the results you see? Share “practical tips” (remembering that we have different personalities, opportunities and responsibilities and that the father wants us to be us and not someone else) and any recent answers to prayer-especially if they have been a long time coming.

Dare you share unanswered prayers – either ones you are still praying or that you have given up on?

Think about the group’s prayer life (and the church’s as a whole) in the same way. How does it match up to the habitual/repeated/continuous/in the face of problems pattern we have been looking at?

Concluding

Spend time worshipping God for his prayer answering nature and thanking him for the right and ability to pray. Then ask him what you should be praying for.

If this prayer is answered on the spot or you have continuing things you as a group are praying for –do it!

If you do not already keep a prayer diary – (even if its simply a list of requests with a space for a tick when the answer comes) –then think hard about starting it.

(leaders- you may need to be selective in what bits you use –as long as you do the “concluding”!)

irl 7/2/06