



21 DAYS OF PRAYER

Sermon Discussion Questions
01-25-26

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Sermon Series: 21 Days of Prayer
Week 4: Being with God

1. ICE BREAKER: What's something you rely on GPS for that you *probably* could learn to do without... but don't want to? (*Bonus: have you ever blindly followed directions that went very wrong?*)
2. Read our Scripture for this week, Luke 10:38-42:

³⁸*As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"*

⁴¹*"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴²but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*

What are you noticing as you read this Scripture? If you're familiar with this passage, are you noticing anything new? Do you identify with any of the people? Who, and why?

3. In the message, we began by thinking about the goal of prayer. Often, we think that the goal of prayer is to get the answers that we are looking for. However, the goal of prayer is not results, it's relationship.

Share with your group some of the reasons that you pray. How do you feel about the idea that the goal of prayer is relationship? Do you feel that prayer helps your relationship with God? Why or why not?

4. Sandra Richter says that God' 'Plan A' - from the very beginning - has been the "People of God, in the Place of God, dwelling in the Presence of God." God wants to be with His people, and has designed His people to be with Him.

Talk about this idea. How do you see God wanting to be with you? What are some ways that you see this happening on a broader scale - either across human history, or in Scripture? How does it make you feel that God desires to be with you?

5. Reread Luke 10:39-40. While this is not a passage specifically about prayer, we see an example of being with Jesus, contrasted with an example of being drawn away from Jesus. Jesus says in Luke 10:42 that Mary chose what is "better."

Do you typically identify more with Martha or with Mary? Why? If Mary chose what is better, what do you think keeps most of us from choosing that same posture in everyday life?

There are three obstacles that most of us face when trying to be with God...

6. First, we often are drawn from the presence of God by hurry. Dallas Willard said, "*Hurry is the great enemy of the spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.*"

Discuss the concept from the message that 'busy' and 'hurry' are two different things. How can you be busy 'slow'? Where do you notice hurry showing up most in your life right now, and how does it affect your ability to be present—with God or with people?

7. Next, when we try to spend time in the presence of God, we often face distraction. Distractions can be internal, external, or even the pressure of trying to make sure that we're "doing prayer right."

When you try to slow down or be quiet with God, what tends to distract you first—external noise, internal thoughts, or pressure to "do it right"? What are some ways that you have found to refocus on God?

8. Finally, fear can be a reason that we choose not to sit in the presence of God. When you make time to sit before God without an agenda, in quiet and stillness, then whatever is down in us will come up to the surface in prayer.

Have you ever experienced this in your own life? Is there anything you think you might be avoiding in quiet moments with God—emotions, questions, or parts of your story—and why do you think that is? What fears or uncertainties do you have when you think about making this type of prayer a part of your spiritual rhythms?

9. PRACTICE: The first step in being with God is simply stilling yourself for a few moments to be quiet, while making yourself aware of His presence. In the message, we suggested starting with 3 minutes.

Have someone in your group put on prayerful music, and set a timer for 3 minutes. During this time, try to focus your attention on God. Set your agenda and thoughts aside. Set aside your expectations. Say to God, "Here I am, Lord."

After 3 minutes, discuss your experience with your group. Remember, it's okay if you feel like 'nothing' happened, if it felt awkward, or if you weren't really sure what to do. This is a practice that will gradually grow fruit in your life.

21 DAYS OF PRAYER PRACTICE:

We encourage you to commit as a group to engage in 21 days of prayer, which the church will observe from January 11-31. Decide how you will hold each other accountable throughout the three weeks to the following rhythms:

- Daily - For 15 minutes, pray the prayer prompts in the COH App or website
- Weekly - Pray and fast on Thursdays
- Monthly - Join us for worship night on Sunday, February 1!

Find more information here: <https://communityofhope.church/21daysofprayer> or on the Community of Hope app!