



Small Group Discussion Resource The Time is Now – Prayer John 17

1. Read this poem together about Christopher Robin saying his prayers. Do you relate to this at all? How?

*Little Boy kneels at the foot of the bed. Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares! Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.
God bless Mummy. I know that's right. Wasn't it fun in the bath to-night?
The cold's so cold, and the hot's so hot. Oh! God bless Daddy - I quite forgot.
If I open my fingers a little bit more, I can see Nanny's dressing-gown on the door.
It's a beautiful blue, but it hasn't a hood. Oh! God bless Nanny and make her good.
Mine has a hood, and I lie in bed. And pull the hood right over my head,
And I shut my eyes, and I curl up small, and nobody knows that I'm there at all.
Oh! Thank you, God, for a lovely day. And what was the other I had to say?
I said "Bless Daddy," so what can it be? Oh! Now I remember it. God bless Me. (A.A. Milne)*

2. Read through our theme passage together and then pray that God would give you insight into these truths.

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:7-11

3. In this study we are going to take a look at John 17, where Jesus prays to the Father shortly before his death. The great Scottish reformer, John Knox, said of this prayer in John 17 – “In this chapter we are in the holy of holies of the scripture itself”. Why do you think he said that?
4. Read John 17 together slowly, knowing you are walking on holy ground.
5. Why did Jesus need to pray? How does Philippians 2 answer that question? Remember 1 John 2: 6 – *whoever claims to live in Christ ought to walk as Jesus walked*. Prayer was a notable feature of Jesus' life and needs to be a notable feature of our lives. Yet, if we are honest, most of us struggle with prayer, and that is why we need to study the prayers of the Bible for insight. What struggles do you have in prayer?
6. What posture do you assume when you are praying? How would you feel about praying with your eyes open and looking up to heaven?

7. How does Jesus define and describe “eternal life”? How does one receive eternal life?
8. If you are daring enough, discuss the tension between divine election and free will. God chooses us, but at the same time we choose him. How does Jesus make this possible?
9. Jesus speaks about being reunited with God the Father in his glorified state. Although Jesus willingly took on human form and limitation, do you think he longed to return to his former glory?
10. It appears as if God the father has given you as a gift to God the son. How do you feel about that?
11. As Christians, we are still left in this world. In verses 15 and 16 Jesus prays for us by saying - *My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.* ¹⁶ *They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.* Why didn't Jesus remove us from the world and take us to heaven, the moment we accepted him into our lives?
12. Reflect on 1 John 2:15-16. Why is it so hard to be “in” the world but not “of” the world? ¹⁵⁻¹⁷ *Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity. 1 John 2:15-16 (MSG)*
13. One commentator suggested there are a number of ways Christians respond to the world. We can isolate, insulate, vegetate or imitate. Describe examples of how you have observed these trends.
14. Jesus calls us out of this world in order to send us back into this world to be salt and light for him. He wants us to “permeate” the world. How has that been working for you?
15. Why is unity in the church so important? Does unity mean uniformity? Read Ephesians 4:2-6 and describe the type of unity we are to have as Jesus followers.
16. In this prayer Jesus demonstrates being alert and of sober mind while in prayer. What principles can you learn from his example?

Spend some time praying together as you end your discussion. Know that every time you pray, you too are walking on holy ground!