

Family

Week 4 Group Guide | Message by Chad Bruegman

Start

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

Do you make it a point to exercise? If so, what do you like to do? If you don't right now, what changed and why?

Share

Welcome to our current series "Family."

Driving by almost any neighborhood, we see rows and rows of houses. A house is what we see from the outside, but it's what happens on the inside that makes it a home. Not every house is a home. The people who inhabit it define a home. It is about the family life inside that makes it feel like home.

God's church is not a building; it is the people of God that make up the church. A membership class will not make someone a member. A member is someone who has a relationship with Jesus Christ and is fully engaged in the life God has called them to alongside other believers. It is a family to be a part of, not something we sign up for. Just like any family, we enjoy each other's friendship, encourage one another, argue at times, sit at the table, and apologize and find ways to help serve our brothers and sisters in Christ.

At Red Rocks Church we believe in the family of God. All of us have a place at the table thanks to what Jesus Christ has done for us. We don't build the church; God builds the church and calls us to play a part using our God-given abilities, resources and time to run the one and only race that matters. We get to do Kingdom work and invite others to join the family that they have always been longing for.

This week, we are talking about prayer. One of the biggest privileges of the Christian life is being able to stop everything and personally talk with the Creator of the universe. It is a staggering truth that we have the access and ability to ask God to listen to us and for us to sit still and listen to Him.

As you might have realized throughout this series, we are talking about what it means to be a part of the family. One of the vital things we have the privilege to do is to pray both personally and together as a family. In the start of this weekly study, you were asked if you exercise. For lots of us, we probably felt some guilt or embarrassment at this question. For others, it was a well-utilized time to brag about what we do. If you do exercise; good for you! According to God's word, it has value. In the same way, there is great value in training to be godly. Not all training is enjoyable at the time, but it does hold promise.

Let's read Timothy 4:7-9

How does physical training bring value to one's life?

In the same way, how does training to be godly bring value in all things?

How do you think prayer would contribute to becoming more godly?

Grow

When we look at the life of Jesus, we see him immersed in a continual rhythm of prayer with the Father. It was this continual conversation with the Father that is so intriguing to see. Whether it was Jesus withdrawing to solitary places to pray or publicly praying, it was in his divine nature to continually commune with the Father.

Have a few people pick a verse to read aloud... Luke 5:16, Matthew 19:13, Luke 6:12 and Hebrews 5:1-10

In Richard's *The Teacher's Commentary*, we see how Jesus could empathize with our human struggles:

In Hebrews 5 the writer says more about Jesus' humanity and its relationship to His present high priestly ministry. First, in Gethsemane Jesus knew a desperate extremity which drove Him to pray "with loud cries and tears" (v. 7). Note that Jesus prayed to One who could "save Him from *death*," not "save Him from *dying*." And God did, taking Jesus from the very grip of death in Resurrection. Yet Jesus' suffering extended through the ultimate—dying itself. Jesus surely *does* understand human weakness: He experienced all that it means.

This full and total identification with us enables Jesus to "deal gently" with us when we go astray. The Greek word, *metriopatheia*, suggests a balanced involvement. We've seen mothers so upset at a child's accident that they are unable to help. *Metriopatheia* suggests both feeling with the injured, yet being detached enough to react and to act for the other's good.

Second, the writer says that Jesus met His dying with "reverent submission." Thus He was able to "learn obedience" from the things He suffered (vv. 7–8). We never benefit from our trials or sufferings when we react rebelliously or in panic. God seeks to strengthen us through every experience of life. Meeting life with reverent submission frees us from being overwhelmed, and helps us grow in our own ability to feel with those who are hurt or needed without becoming so "sympathetic" that we are unable to help.

Finally the writer notes that these experiences and His suffering "made [Jesus] perfect" (v. 9). The phrase does *not* suggest that Jesus fell short, as God or as a human being.

The Greek word, *teleios*, speaks of a *perfection that is related to the purpose or function for which a thing or person is designed*. If Jesus were to be fitted for the task of High Priest. He “learned,” in the sense of personally experiencing, the pain of being human and the cost of obedience when suffering is involved.

After reading these verses, do you have any new insights or thoughts about Jesus’ prayer life that you might not have thought about before?

Does it encourage you to see that Jesus can identify with our human cries and tears when it comes to prayer?

Have you ever really considered that God can empathize with our weaknesses?

Move

We have walked through many verses about how Jesus lived his life in constant prayer despite the continual demands on his time. Bill Hybels wrote a book called *Too Busy Not to Pray*, which alludes to this very truth. We need to follow the perfect example in the life of Jesus and follow in his footsteps. The busier we are, the more we need to get alone with God and ask for strength, guidance and peace in the midst of our busyness. Whether it is school, meetings, juggling work and home demands; the first thing to go tends to be time with God when we are pressed. It truly feels like a battle at times. There is a real reason for that; because it is a battle.

Let’s end by reading Ephesians 6:10-20

How can we be strong in the Lord?

There are specific reasons each piece of armor is worn. Going through each piece, why do you think they are important?

Today, if there were one piece of armor that you tend to forget to put on, what would it be for you? What do you think you can specifically start doing this week to put your prayer-life a priority?

Pray

As a group, spend some time praying for each other, especially for the struggles that people might be facing today. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men’s and women’s groups to talk more freely.

To Go

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.