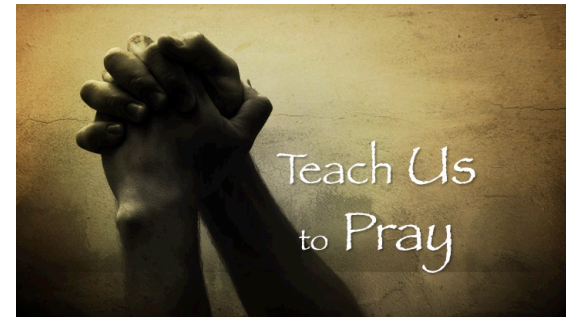


Praying Together

Spend time praying together with your group, giving time to share joys and concerns, but making sure you have enough time to actually pray. Jot down your own prayer requests before your gathering begins.



Looking at My Reflection

Psalm 139

Eric Sorenson

April 29, 2018

Notes on How to Pray for Others

How to Pray for our Church

Pray for unity and a growing sense of community

Pray for the Senior Pastor search committee that begins meeting soon

Pray for the church staff during this time of transition

Pray that our church board will be filled with God's wisdom and insight

Pray for the hospitalized and the infirmed

Pray for children's, youth and adult ministries

Other Concerns:

Pray for our Community, our country, the World, and our missionaries.

Opening Up

True confession: On an average day, how often do you look in the mirror?

Extra credit: On an average day, how much *time* do you spend looking in the mirror?

Digging Into Our Text

Read Psalm 139.23, making sure to personalize the words. How does it make you feel to totally open yourself up before God? Is there anything in the Psalm indicating how David felt doing that? Now read all of Psalm 139. The Psalm takes up 18 verses just to reflect on God's amazing ways before he invites God to search him. Why do you think he does that?

Take a few minutes to think about verses 19-22. This section feels somewhat abrupt. In what ways does it fit into the rest of the Psalm? In what ways might these verses reveal the circumstances that gave rise to this Psalm?

Note the division of the Psalm into three strophes before the shift at verse 19. Each focuses on one of God's eternal attributes (characteristics). Read over the first strophe (verses 1-6), and paraphrase the various statements about God that really pop out to you. What is the overarching characteristic of God that's in focus there? Repeat the same exercise for the second strophe in verses 7-12, then for the third strophe in verses 13-18. After that, go back to the earlier question: Why does David give so much space to reflecting on God's amazing characteristics before he invites God to search him in verses 23-24?

How does verse 1 connect to verse 23? Why do you think David is inviting God to so deeply search him? Is this his way of saying that he has no faults, or is this a sincere plea to be examined? What do you imagine he hopes will come of this searching?

Ponder again the wonderful truths about God displayed in verses 1-18, and think about God the way he is being described here. How do you imagine that a God with these characteristics might examine a person? What might be his approach to examining someone? How do you feel about opening up your heart to God in light of what you read about him there?

Getting Personal

Do you have any experience praying a "Prayer of Examine?" (A Prayer of Examine invites God to search out your heart). If so, have you had *positive* experiences with letting God examine you? How is it that letting God examine your heart and thoughts can be a really good thing? How can it be said that the "Prayer of Examine" leads toward wholeness? What role do confession and repentance have in this kind of prayer?

For Pondering in Private

Whether or not you've ever dedicated a time of prayer to inviting God to examine you, give it a try before your Life Group meets. You may choose the Ten Commandments as a guide (Exodus 20.1-7) or the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.1-9. See also: Romans 12.9-21; Galatians 5.16-26; Colossians 3.1-10. Let this lead to confession, and rejoicing in the eternal goodness of our gracious God. Complete your time by reading Psalm 103.11-14.