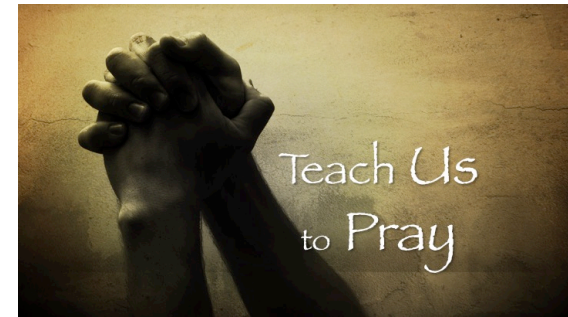


Praying Together

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.

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Groaning for Glory

Romans 8: 18-30

Eric Sorenson May 20, 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 Lead 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

Had you ever celebrated Pentecost Sunday before last Sunday? Why do you think the color of Pentecost is red?

Digging Into Our Text

Read the great story of Pentecost in Acts 2 (at least the first 12 verses).

Which one of the verses there would you choose to capture the essence of what transpired? Read Acts 2.38, and highlight the two promises identified there. Compare that to Romans 8.9, and then compare it to Paul's rhetorical question in Galatians 3.2. What do you learn about the gift of the Holy Spirit from that three-way comparison? How was the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2 the beginning of something new?

Now read Romans 8.18-30. There is a lot packed into the verses, so begin by noticing that it starts with a reference to "glory" in verse 18. What is Paul saying about glory in that verse? According to the verse, what is the opposite of glory? Note that "glory" appears again in verse 21. How does verse 23 help clarify what "glory" means in verse 21? To get a clearer understanding of this idea, read 2 Corinthians 5.3-4. What then does this coming "glory" seem to be referring to? (You may also want to refer to 1 John 3.2).

Back to Romans 8. Note how many times Paul uses the word, "groaning" (or "sighing"). What is he referring to? Note again verse 23, and observe that two groan while they await "glory." How can it be said that creation groans? In summary, Paul is saying that creation groans while it awaits the time God's children will be fully restored to their original design. At that point, something happens to creation. What is it that happens? (Pay close attention to verse 21). During this time of groaning, we have received the "first fruits of the Spirit" (verse 23). What do you think Paul means?

In this time of waiting, there is yet a third party that groans (or "sighs"). How is that groaning described, and what is the purpose of it? How do these verses describe the role of the Spirit in our prayers? In your own words, according to verses 26-27, how would you describe the heavenly interaction that takes place as we pray? Extra points: Read the famous verse 28, and in light of everything you've just learned, jot down what you think it means there.

Getting Personal

What does it mean to you that the Holy Spirit essentially interprets your prayers to the Father? What does the work of the Holy Spirit in prayer tell you about your feeble attempts to pray? What relief does it bring you? What comfort does it bring? Share this with your group

For Pondering in Private

Take some time to pray, specifically to thank God for the gift of his Spirit, and the role of the Spirit in your prayers.