Wresting with Doubt

**Session 5**: WHEN PRAYERS Go UNANSWERED **Participant copy**

**Joys And Concerns**

Session Goals

Through conversation, activities, and reflection, participants will:

* discern what prayer is and what prayer is not.
* consider the question "What difference does praying make?" and
* explore ways God uses us to be answers to the prayers of others.

**Biblical Foundation**

• Philippians 4:6-7

**Opening Prayer**

**Video Study and Discussion**

Play the session 5 video

1. Did anything specific stand out as you watched the video?
2. What is one thing you learned that you did not know before?

Keep the video in mind as well as the book and Bible passages throughout the rest of your discussion.

**Bible Study and Discussion: Philippians 4:6-7**

**Read Philippians 4:6-7:**

3. What do we learn about prayer from this scripture passage?

4. What are we encouraged to bring up in our prayers?

5. What accompanies our petitions?

6. Why are we invited and encouraged to pray?

**Book Study and Discussion**

**Hyperbole and Metaphor in the Words of Jesus.**

***(****pp 111-121***)**

**Read Matthew 21:21-22**.

Hamilton points out that Jesus used both hyperbole and metaphor in his illustrations. Hyperbole is an exaggeration to make a point. Metaphor compares one thing with another to make a point. He shares examples of hyperbole and metaphor in the first two paragraphs under "***Hyperbole and*** ***Metaphor in the Words of Jesus."*** You may want to invite participants to offer other examples of hyperbole and metaphor in scripture.

**Note that Jesus's words in Matthew 21:21-22 are meant to be taken seriously but not literally.**

7. What is Jesus teaching us about prayer in Matthew 21:21-22?

8. What "mountains'' do you pray for God to move or help you face?

**9.** What mountains has God moved for you?

**Jesus on the Power of Prayer."**

(pp 105 -110)

**10.** What examples of different prayers stand out to you?

**11**. Why might it not be in our best interest or in the best interest of someone else if God answered every prayer the way we ask God to?

1. What is the difference between unanswered prayer and prayer that is answered, but not answered as we wished?

**"What Difference Does Praying Make?"**

**(**pp 114-121**)**

1. How have you experienced "Prayer as Relationship"?

**14.** How has God used another person to be part of the answer to your prayer?

  **15**. How has God used you to be part of the answer to another person's prayer?

**16.** How have you experienced prayer as "spiritual power, peace, and strength" either in response to your own prayers or the prayers of others for you?

**17**. When have you offered yourself to God in a spirit of cooperation and received relief from something detrimental that was holding you?

**18.** What is the primary point in praying?

**Wrapping Up**

**Closing Activity**

**19.** "What words describe your experience of prayer?

**20.** What words would you like to describe your experience of prayer?

**21.** How would you like to grow in your prayer life?