

DISTANT

DISTANT (PART 2) WEEK OF MAY 24

This weekend, we wrapped up our short miniseries, *Distant*. Pastor Dre talked about the many ways God calls us into prayer and how each can help us grow closer to Him, even when He feels distant.

PAUSE

Before you start the study, take a few moments and focus on the following passages of Scripture:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

*Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?*

*My God, I cry out by day, but you do not
answer,*

by night, but I find no rest.

*Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the one Israel praises*

*In you our ancestors put their trust;
they trusted and you delivered them.*

*To you they cried out and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put
to shame. ...*

Do not be far from me,

for trouble is near

and there is no one to help. ...

But you, Lord, do not be far from me.

*You are my strength; come quickly to
help me. ...*

*I will declare your name to my people;
in the assembly I will praise you.*

You who fear the Lord, praise him!

*All you descendants of Jacob, honor
him!*

*Revere him, all you descendants of
Israel!*

*For he has not despised or scorned
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.*

Psalm 22:1-5; 11; 19; 22-24

STUDY

1. As you look over your life experience, what has formed your view of prayer and how you practice it (e.g., an early religious experience, a private school, watching your parents, the instruction or model of a pastor)?

a. How have those things shaped your prayer life?

2. What does your current practice of prayer look like? For instance, how often do you pray, what do you most often pray for, and do you have scheduled or structured times of prayer?

- a. What types of circumstances prompt you to pray spontaneously?
3. All of us carry expectations into our time with God.
 - a. What do you expect or anticipate from your time with the Lord?
 - b. What has shaped those expectations?
 - c. Does God ever operate outside your expectations in your time with Him?
 4. Sometimes God feels incredibly close, and sometimes He seems indifferent. Despite knowing that God is always with us as followers of Jesus, it can be hard to overcome our human perceptions and emotions.
 - a. In what ways have you felt seen and heard by God during your prayer time with Him?
 - b. Have you ever had a moment when you felt like you were talking to a wall? Explain.
 - c. Has there been a time when you've seen an answer to prayer? How so?
 - i. At that time, did it feel like God had been close to you or far off?

RESPOND

Below, we've provided a few types of prayer exercises covered in this weekend's teaching. Two are designed for you to do alone, and one is designed for your Life Group to do together.

Prayer Exercise 1: Authenticity in Prayer

1. This weekend we learned that prayer is a place to be authentic with God. **Read Psalm 88.**
 - a. What emotions are expressed in this psalm?
 - b. How does the psalm end? Are the psalmist's concerns resolved?

c. Why do you think God would allow this messy, emotional psalm to be included in Scripture?

2. For this exercise, set a timer for 5 minutes and speak to God authentically about whatever comes to mind.

a. Ask God for the bravery to be honest and authentic with Him. Ask Him to show you any area, belief, emotion, or opinion that you've held back from Him. Remember that He knows you completely, and anything you're keeping from Him is not really hidden. He loves you and desires to shape your whole heart to reflect His.

Prayer Exercise 2: Listening Prayer

1. This week, we learned that prayer is a place to listen to God. It's often in our time of prayer that God will remind us of the truth of Scripture or show us how to apply it to our lives in unique ways. **Read John 10:27** and **John 14:25-26**.

a. In your own words, what is Jesus communicating in these passages?

2. For this exercise, find a secluded place where you are least likely to be interrupted and set a timer for 8 minutes.

a. Ask the Lord to meet you in this time; to reveal truth to you from His Word, remind you of your identity in Him, challenge your perspective, etc. Sit as silently as possible and wait on Him to reveal whatever He wants to reveal in this moment. Write down what comes to mind to review later, compare with Scripture, and perhaps ask wise counsel what they think about what you sense He revealed to you.

Prayer Exercise 3: A Community Together in Prayer

1. This week, we learned that prayer is both individual *and* communal. We get the privilege of connecting with God, together as His people. In our time together as a Life Group, we're going to practice praying together as a community that adores God.

a. Before you begin, play instrumental worship music through a Bluetooth speaker or similar device. **Read Psalm 34:1-3 out loud together.**

b. Spend 5 minutes individually asking God to remind you of the truth about who He is. Feel free to use your Bible as a resource during this time.

c. After the 5 minutes have passed, as a group, pray out loud, declaring the truths about who the Lord is that He reminded you of during your time of listening.