

Session 1. JESUS AND THE CALL TO MISSION

Lipscomb Center for Spiritual Renewal

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The Basis of Our Call to Mission: A God Who Loves

- The Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21-22).
 - Baptism as sinner's prayer (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
 - Ordination for ministry: heavens opened, Spirit descends, voice speaks.
 - Ministry of beloved children.

Power and Guidance for Mission: Time Alone with God.

- Early, after a long day of ministry (Mark 1:35).
- Late, after a long day of ministry (Matt. 14:22-23).
- Often (Luke 5:16).

Prayer and the Crises of Mission

- A Crisis of Leadership: Choosing the 12 (Luke 6:12-16).
- A Crisis of Identity.
 - Revealing himself as Messiah: Luke 9:18-22.
 - The transfiguration Luke 9:29-36.
- A Crisis of Faith: Prayers Around the Cross.
 - Intercessory prayer: John 17.
 - Gethsemane: Matt. 26:36-46.
 - On the cross: Matt. 27:45-46; Luke 23:34,46.

Table discussion:

1. Is baptism a prayer? If so, how does it relate to the "sinner's prayer" that many ask those outside of Christ to pray?
2. Do you have a time set aside for private prayer each day? If so, when? If not, what keeps you from this habit of prayer?
3. In what sense do we see Christ revealed and transfigured in prayer? Do we better understand who he is when we pray?
4. Is it possible to pray without words? What is meditation? Contemplation? What did Jesus do all night in prayer?

Session 2.**PRAYER AS THE MISSION OF JESUS IN THE CHURCH**

- The Ministry of Prayer in the Early Church.
 - Constancy in prayer: Acts 1:4; 2:42; 3:1.

 - Prayer during the challenges of faith:
 - Choosing workers: Acts 1:23-26; 6:1-6; 13:1-3.
 - In prison: Acts 4:23-31; 12:15-17; 16:25-34.
 - At death: Acts 7:59.

- What a Praying Church Might Look Like:
 - Members devoted to prayer.
 - Praying Leaders (elders meetings, duties of ministers, a prayer minister).
 - Praying worship (silence, listening, intercession).
 - Prayer before programs (God's power or ours?).

Questions for further thought:

1. Have we taken prayer seriously as a church? If not, what has taken the place of prayer?
2. Besides the suggestions above, what are some ways we can recover prayer as church?
3. Is it realistic to think elders' meeting could be devoted solely to prayer, not "business"? Is there a problem with ministers devoting ten hours a week to prayer? Why would some object to these suggestions? What does this say about our view of church?
4. Why is it easier to study and talk about prayer than to pray?