

Next Week's Prayers



"...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

Jas. 5:16

▶ Prayer Exercise

If you are a disciple of Jesus, which part(s) of the prayer in John 17 touch closest to home in your life?

A good exercise is to re-read Jesus' prayer, and everywhere a noun or pronoun refers to disciples, put your name there. Read it that way once a day this week.

Having read what Jesus prayed for, now word your own prayer for the same concerns.



DEVELOPING STUDENTS
OF THE BIBLE

Sunday Morning Bible Class



▶ 40 Great Prayers of the Bible

Farmerville
Church of Christ

Jesus' Prayer for His Disciples
John 17

Prayer Study # 37

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Sunday Morning Bible Class

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Jesus' Prayer for His Disciples

Jn 17:1-26

This prayer is much more the "Lord's prayer," than is the model prayer recorded in Matthew 6. There, the intent was to instruct in how to pray. Here, Jesus prays for his disciples, both the ones following in person and those who would follow later (including you and me!).

It is sometimes called the "High Priestly Prayer," since Jesus fills the role of great high priest for the church.

The prayer begins by making a clear distinction: Jesus had been speaking to his disciples for four chapters. Now he spoke to the Father. Read Mt. 13 – 16 as necessary background to understand the prayer.

What Can We Learn?

1. A basic outline of the passage
 - A. 17:1-5 Jesus prays for himself
 - B. 17:6-19 Jesus prays for his disciples
 - C. 17:20-26 Jesus prays for future believers
2. In praying for himself, Jesus affirmed the purpose of the Father and sought to glorify God in himself.
3. Jesus was seriously concerned for the spiritual health and well-being of his disciples. A major portion of this prayer is for their strength of faith.
4. It was of major importance to Jesus that his disciples be sanctified in the truth (equated with God's word).
4. Compare 17:21 with 13:34-35. It seems that Jesus knew that how his disciples handled the stresses of life would relate directly to what the world would accept.
5. This is a prayer that eternal concerns for those who follow Jesus.

Questions to Ponder

1. What would you say is the heart or "spirit" of this prayer?
2. Why do chapters 13 – 16 so effectively serve as an appropriate background to this prayer?
3. In what way is eternal life in knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ who was sent by God?
4. From Jn. 17:18, explain how the mission of the disciples is an extension of the mission of Jesus. In what ways are the two missions similar? In what ways different?
5. Verses like 17:21 are sometimes used to promote the idea of unity. Do you think Jesus had organizational unity in mind here or spiritual unity? Is there a difference between the two?
6. Jesus did not pray for the "world" but for disciples. Why do you think he focused on disciples instead of those in tremendous spiritual need?
7. How can we have Christ's joy fulfilled in ourselves?

