



PRAYER IS OUR PRIORITY

Week 04

ICEBREAKER

What is something you wanted really badly as a kid that you asked your parents for repeatedly?

TESTIMONY

Give someone or a couple 5-10 minutes to share their testimony with the group.

SCRIPTURE

ACTS 4:23-31

“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord, you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

‘Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.’

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

DEVOTIONAL

The early church faced a situation they couldn't control. Peter and John had been threatened. Opposition was growing. The future was uncertain. So the church got together and prayed. They didn't pray for God to remove the difficulty. They asked God to give them boldness to remain faithful in the middle of it. That is what prayer does. **Prayer reminds us that we need God.**

It's possible for a community group to spend an hour talking about our problems and only a few minutes actually bringing those problems before God. But healthy Christian community doesn't just say, *"I'm sorry you are going through that."* It also says: *"Let's pray about that right now."*

We want prayer to become more than the way we open or close our meetings. We want it to become part of our **culture**, something natural that happens when we are together and throughout the week. Because ultimately, we cannot change hearts, heal relationships, give wisdom, transform circumstances, or produce spiritual growth. **God can.**

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. What stands out to you about the way the believers pray in Acts 4?
2. What tends to keep us from praying honestly and consistently with other people?
3. How can we make prayer a natural part of our relationships rather than something we do at the beginning and end of group meetings?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

Rather than ending tonight with general prayer requests, spend meaningful time praying. Have everyone share one specific thing they are asking God to do in their life right now. Write the requests down. Then divide into groups of two or three and pray specifically for one another. Encourage everyone to keep those requests and pray for them over the coming weeks.