

## Small Group Homework

For the week of February 5, 2017

### GETTING STARTED

What aspect of a worship service are you most likely to get excited about when your alarm rings on Sunday morning?

### LOOKING BACK

Looking back on Sunday, is there anything that stood out to you, confused you, or challenged you?

### MY STORY

1. Since you are involved in a sermon-based small group, it's likely that you are also regularly participating in Sunday morning worship services. What difference does regular worship with fellow disciples make in your life?
2. How would you explain to someone the difference between attending a worship service as a consumer, versus participating as a disciple?

### DIGGING DEEPER

**Matthew 18:19-20 (NLT)** <sup>19</sup> "I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."

1. Many of us have agreed with others in prayer for something that seemed good and honoring to God, and yet God did not do what we asked. What is a possible explanation for this discrepancy?
2. One of the principles we see in this teaching from Jesus is that our prayers are not to be individualistic or self-serving. If five different people have applied for the same job, and they are all praying to get that job, some of them are going to be disappointed. What is a prayer that these five people might agree to pray together?

3. Another principle is that unselfish prayer will be answered. However, the broader scope of Scripture shows us that God doesn't give us simply what we think we want, but instead provides for what He knows we need. Remember that our hearts are corrupt, so we can't even trust our own desires. Even Jesus, whose heart was not corrupt, prayed, "Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (Mark 14:36b). He desired escape from suffering, but He knew that the Father's will might instead be to give Him the strength to endure. If the Father had granted what Jesus asked for in the moment, it would have interrupted their ultimate goal. With that in mind, what is something that we can pray for when someone is suffering, in addition to relief or healing?
  
4. Jesus goes on to say that He will be present in the midst of a gathering of believers, even a group as small as a family unit. God uses all kinds of churches for His purposes. In other parts of the world, "house churches" of just a handful of people are multiplying exponentially. In North America, "mega" churches with thousands in attendance have been growing, while many smaller churches are closing their doors.
  - a. What types of churches have you experienced?
  
  - b. Why do you think so many people are drawn to large churches?
  
  - c. What advantages might a large church have in making more and better disciples?
  
  - d. What advantages might a small church have in making more and better disciples?

### **BRINGING IT HOME**

Consider a prayer request that is on your mind right now. Write it in a way that is unselfish, and that focuses not on escape from hardship, but on God's ultimate victory:

### **PRAYERS:**