

Daring to Dream Again #4

Empowering everything you do for God with Prayer

Opening Question:

Take time to share testimonies of God's response to personal prayer.

Worship/Prayer

(Share Goals and Guidelines)

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:1-28

Hannah could not have children and it had made her life miserable. In her desperation, she came to see God as her only hope. At Shiloh she dared to dream again, making a bold commitment to the Lord: "Grant me a son, and I will give him back to you." The Lord responded with a miracle child whom she named Samuel, which means, "heard by God." She kept her promise to God out of a heart of thankfulness for His provision. Samuel grew up to be a key player in God's plan for His people. ***Hannah wanted a son but God needed a prophet!***

Even though we know we have a lot to be thankful for, life has a way of stealing our joy. Feelings of inadequacy or lack can reduce us to tears. If you're not careful this feeling of lack can rob us of our spiritual dreams.

God is keenly aware of our limited resources. That's why He offers His help in everything. God asks us to share with Him our deepest spiritual longings. He won't turn away even from a barren woman's desperate prayers for a son.

It's impossible for us to fulfill God's desires for our lives through our own efforts. A flurry of activity is never a substitute for serving in tandem with the living God. Taking time to cry out to Him is never a waste of time. ***It is in these times of crying out that the commitments are made that help us to align our dreams with His, allowing us to be a player in God's big picture.***

Application:

1. Have you ever anguished in prayer over a dream like Hannah did?
2. Do you think Hannah's vow to God was connected to her receiving her miracle?
3. What, if anything would God be asking of us before we see our dreams fulfilled?
4. Do your dreams for your life align with God's dreams for you?
5. How has God been dealing with you lately? What is He asking of you?

(Close with Vision/Prayer)

Lord, as your servants we sincerely desire to please you and to fulfill your will for our lives. We are not asking for every detail of your plan, we are asking that you give us the strength to trust you and to commit to you everything we have or will have. Empower our prayers with your wisdom so that we can serve you better than we ever have before. Amen.

Daring to Dream Again #5

Confronting our ungodly prejudices

Opening Question:

Is there any kind of food you would never dare try?

Worship/Prayer

(Share Goals and Guidelines)

Scripture: 1Acts 10:1-35

Cornelius was a seeker open to God's truth. Peter had not only spent more than 3 years with Christ he had also heard Christ speak prophetically that all the world should be presented the gospel. Yet Cornelius's encounter with Peter and the gospel would have happened if God had not challenged Peter (A Jew) and his prejudices against non-jews (Gentiles) like Cornelius.

The word Prejudice implies a judgment that has been made before all the facts are known. And the fact is that God loves all people, not just certain ones. This is a lesson many still need to learn. The people of your particular ethnic background or church denomination or economic status or race are not the only individuals for whom God has deep feelings.

Peter needed to widen his circle of association. So might you! Maybe God knows that the dreams you are daring to birth out of God's will require the help of some unlikely friends.

Application:

1. What prejudices do we still face as a church?
2. How do we overcome the realities of prejudice to fully impact our church and community?
3. How has God been dealing with you lately?

(Close with Vision/Prayer)

What can we do as a group to assure that everyone would feel welcomed and loved in our Community Group?

God help us to not shut anyone out of our lives because of racism, sexism, denominationalism or prejudice based on age, economic or educational status, political persuasion. But rather to reach to them with arms of love and compassion not withholding our hearts from any. Amen.

Daring to Dream Again #6

Getting the most out of Sunday church

Opening Question:

What is your favorite passage of scripture?

Worship/Prayer

(Share Goals and Guidelines)

Scripture: Col 1:6,

Spiritual growth occurs when we remember God's Word and apply it over time. Since we can not apply what we cannot recall, it is vital that we take steps to remember the sermons and lessons we hear at church. They convey God's word and give us the keys to apply it to our everyday lives. Forgotten words from the lips of God are one of the greatest tragedies in the christian life.

First we must recall but it takes more than that to produce spiritual growth. What we know has little value if not applied. Knowledge is power only when we use that knowledge to change. We must put our faith into action. James called it being doers of the Word. When we remember God's word and apply it to our lives real transformation begins to take place.

These two simple, but profound, steps can help you turn routine Sundays into life-changing encounters with the risen Lord.

Application:

1. The preparation step. Ask yourself this question weekly: What can I do before, during or after church on Sunday to help me remember and apply God's message for me?
2. The follow up step. Attend church looking for the answer to the following three questions:
 - What is God saying to me?
 - What does he want me to do?
 - How do I do it?

*******Discuss Ideas*******

(Close with Vision/Prayer)

What can we do as a group to assure ourselves that the pulpits in our lives are not waisted?

What areas could you use prayer in to be able to truly grow spiritually?

Daring to Dream Again #7

Seeing the world as God sees it

Opening Question:

What common activity do you dread the most?

Worship/Prayer

(Share Goals and Guidelines)

Scripture: Jonah 3:1-4:11

We're more like Jonah than most of us would care to admit. For example, how would you respond if God clearly called you to missionary work in Mongolia? Don't laugh. God loves Mongolians just as much as He loves North Americans. He wants the missions of people who live there to experience His mercy and grace, even though we might have trouble locating Mongolia on a map. Its hard for us to believe that revival fires will sweep across the vastness of Asia. But I believe it is God's will.

It is impossible to know God well without identifying with His heart for the lost people of the world. We must not be like Jonah, who agreed to the Lord's wishes only when presented with much less desirable options.

Jonah for some reason never really overcame the obstacle of his provincialism. We must do better. We can do better! We can dream with God believing for the salvation of a lost world. Look for places where the spiritual harvest is ripe. Become a world-class citizen. Be willing to go next door or around the globe to be a part of God's dream.

Application:

1. Why was Jonah so reluctant to follow God's lead?
2. Have you ever had a major disagreement with God?
3. In what ways do we as God's people today still sometimes think like Jonah?
4. How has God been dealing with you lately challenging your comfort zone to reach the lost of your world?

(Close with Vision/Prayer)

What can we do as a group to better align ourselves with God's dreams to reach the lost of the world?

What areas could you use prayer in to boost your boldness to say YES to God's plan?