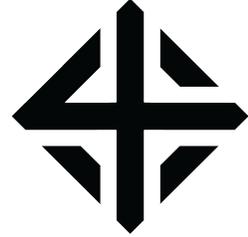


Week of April 13th

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 / 10:23-33



THE CHURCH AT
4POINTS

Prayer Guide

This prayer guide is meant to help you facilitate a guided prayer time based on the discussion of the Word. You can be flexible in how this is used but we do want to pray in response to God's Word and collectively as a church for certain request. Remember, in communal prayer we are not a bunch of individuals having individual conversations with God and only taking turns doing so. We are having a communal conversation with God. Help remind people to "share the time" by being mindful of the length of prayers while also reminding them to pray as many times as they would like.

Facilitate through the following prayer topics:

- Thank God for the freedom we have been given from sin and to serve others in love
- Thank Jesus for laying down His rights so we can experience life with God
- Give God praise for the glory He is due
- Confess any areas of selfish sin and abuse of our liberty that may have weakened other's faith
- Ask God to give us a loving and humble spirit that is willing to joyfully lay down our rights

Collective prayer request this week: (this will feature a request for our church, city, or world that our whole church will be praying over. Encourage everyone to write this down somewhere or make a note and continue to pray for it each day)

-Pray for our church and the churches in our city to not become callous towards those who are outside of the church. Ask that God would help us be deeply concerned for people's eternal future. Pray for our churches to be active in calling people to repentance and faith in Jesus. As a Missional Family, choose one other church in our city to pray over this week.

Discover

Think about this scenario: Joe has been a follower of Jesus for a long time now. He is disciplined to spend time in individual and corporate worship. His motto is "Whatever I do I do it all to the glory of God". He regularly uses this motto as a reminder to work hard and play hard. Joe has applied this to his work of studying theology and the Bible- He has worked really hard- and as a result is very well informed and has deep convictions. However, Joe sometimes finds it difficult to get along and spend time with those who are less informed or who do not share his convictions.

In what ways do you relate to Joe? What are some things about Joe's understanding of bringing God glory would you maybe challenge?

During this session, we will examine two passages: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 and 1 Corinthians 10:23-33.

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

Discuss

1. According to verse 4, what is probably the "knowledge" that all of the Corinthian Christians possess?

2. . Looking back to verse 1, what are the results of this “knowledge” vs the results of love? What is the difference between this “knowledge” and love? *Follow up by asking what the group thinks is meant by “puffs up.”

The Corinthian Christians all possessed a certain spiritual knowledge. They had faith that there exists only one triune God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They knew that an idol had no real power or authority or even existence. But Paul tells us this knowledge was not affecting them properly. Paul reminds them that they are known by God - this reality was not leading them to have compassion on those with weak faith, but was causing them to think too highly of themselves. Those with “weak faith” were struggling with their understanding of idols. They, unlike the more mature believers, were still attaching significance to idols. They were still growing in their understanding of what it meant for there to be one God in three persons - Father, Son, and Spirit. The mature believers were letting their “knowledge” inflate their own spiritual ego, looking down on those who struggled in this area rather than bearing with them in love.

3. In verses 7-12, how does Paul say our use of our rights could affect those with weaker faith?
4. Who are we ultimately sinning against when we misuse our Christian liberty? How is it possible that sinning against our brother or sister is to sin against Christ?

Paul says that our misuse of Christian liberty could result in the “weak person being destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died.” He says that sinning against our brothers and sisters this way is actually a sin against Christ.

5. How does remembering that Christ died for the Christians who you view as having weaker convictions change the way you interact with them?

Have everyone turn now to 10:23-33 and have someone read the passage aloud.

6. Paul makes three consecutive contrasting statements in verses 23-24. What are they? Ask if anyone has a different translation for the words “helpful” and “buildup” found in the ESV. This may help add to the group’s understanding of what Paul is aiming at here.

Paul wants us to see that the Christian life is not about taking what’s ours, but laying down our rights in the service of others. In verse 29 Paul clearly says that our liberty is not determined by someone else’s conscience. But as we will see, the point of our existence is not exercising our rights, but glorifying God.

7. In verse 31, what does Paul say our motivation should be? In verses 32-33, what does Paul say his motivations are in everything he does?
8. How do verses 32 and 33 change or shape the way you think about verse 31? In other words, based on Paul’s motivation in 32 and 33, how do we best go about doing everything for God’s glory?

As Christians, we serve a God who willingly laid down His rights for us and for God’s glory. Jesus has all authority on heaven and earth, but was stripped, mocked, beaten, and murdered on our behalf. When He was standing trial, He said that He could appeal to His Father, who would at once send twelve legions of angels to fight for Him. But He didn’t. He laid down His rights so that we may be saved and so that God would receive glory. We are most emulating the way Christ glorified the Father when we are laying down our liberties and our rights for the sake of others, living not to “seek our own advantage,” but the salvation of others. This is how we best obey the “law of love” Paul is referring to in chapter 8 - our aim is not to be puffed up but rather to build others up.

9. With this understanding of God’s glory in your mind, and the reality that Jesus laid down His rights so that you may be saved and so that God may be glorified, how do we sometimes abuse our liberties instead of putting others first? *help your group think through how we use our time, how we relate to

other churches from different theological backgrounds, our relationship to alcohol, the forms of entertainment we consume, etc.

10. What is an area of your life - parenting, work, use of time or money - in which you have not been living for God's glory and the good of others? How could you better lay down your "rights" in that area and enjoy the freedom of doing all things for the glory of God and others, that they may be saved?

Do

Take some time this week to pray and ask God to reveal to you if you have taken advantage of your liberties to the detriment of a brother or sister. If so, ask God to give you the strength to go to that person and confess, asking their forgiveness.