

THE LENGTH OF OUR PRAYERS

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. (Luke 18:1, NIV)

EVERY LINKS FELLOWSHIP HAS ITS OWN FLAVOR. Most are small groups of men or women meeting for study, conversation, and prayer. This is just what God’s people need—time set aside to be together and talk about God.

That said, I happen to be partial to the Fellowship I meet with every other Wednesday night in central California. It’s a mixed group of men and women, and we work our way through books of the Bible, with an occasional topical study thrown in. Most of the participants are retired or work simply because they love to; some, though not many, play golf. This club has a thriving social membership and these people have been leaders in the schools and businesses and medical centers of their community, so they tend to think in the same direction.

All of that may sound pretty typical of your own club and your own Fellowship. But here’s the thing I love about this gathering. The club offers its weeknight meal on the same evening that we meet. The people come for Bible study at 5 PM in one room, then walk right next door for dinner at 6. It’s the perfect setup to keep the spiritual conversation flowing.

I’ve told you all that for two reasons. First, I wanted to plant a dream in those of you who may not yet have a Links Fellowship where you play golf. But second, I want to tell you that the greatest spiritual concern of these brothers and sisters is the same as it is for many of you—they want the answer to this question: *What about my children? What about my grandchildren?*

When we read the Scriptures and come across passages like the Parable of the Sower, it is deeply concerning to recognize our loved ones not among those thriving in the soil and producing thirty, sixty or a hundredfold, but rather choked by the weeds or dying in the heat. We want to know that our prayers for their salvation will be answered and that they will walk wholly with Jesus.

The hard truth is that we can’t know that. But what we can know is that even when our bodies expire, the prayers we have offered do not. They are fixed in God’s enduring mind, and the answers we seek may come after us. We must then pray earnestly, for the next generation and the one after that. We must bring them to God and seek his mercy, for whenever it may come. We must pray and not give up.

Opening questions What do you especially like about your Links Fellowship or other Bible study group you meet with? For whom do you find yourself praying most when you pray for others?

READING Luke 18:1-8, Hebrews 4:14-16, Revelation 7:9-17

Sticking with it

What points do you find in Jesus’ parable of the persistent widow? How do these challenge you in your own practice of prayer?

Going to God

According to Hebrews 4, what enables us to approach God at all? How should we approach him? What affect does this knowledge have on your thinking about how to pray?

The great eternal gathering

When you read the passage in Revelation 7, how does this glorious scene produce a hope in you for those you love, that they would be saved? What words does this hope spur in you as you pray for them? *Take time even now to pray for these loved ones.*

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2014 Links Players International.