

Word Notes Sunday 30/09/2012 Michael Meeks
Daniel 9: Prayer

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Daniel 9:1-19

Daniel's prayer is a classic. As an example it contains so much about when, how and what to pray yet we should understand that prayer is not about a formula – God has given us His Holy Spirit so we can have a dynamic, personal and real prayer life – even so we can learn to pray more effectively by seeing how people pray in the scripture. And it's never too late to learn, it wasn't until Luke 11 that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray – half way through the story!

Daniel's prayer is in response to knowing how long the LORD would punish Israel but also knowing that He would be ready to listen (Lev 26:40). How might Daniel be praying – in Dan 6:10 we see – and this might indeed be the same prayer. Here is an old man on his knees praying, fasting, in sackcloth and ashes - adding these to a selfish lukewarm prayer will not make it more effective in themselves but the deep personal time with God, in surrender to His majesty, a physical gesture of respect and awe, even something as simple as taking off our shoes, helps us remember that we really have no right to approach God, yet he wants and indeed tells us to come. Even so physical actions must reflect what is in our heart.

Daniel prayed out loud – we know this because others “found him praying” (Dan 6:11). There is a God and we can speak to Him - through speaking we can discipline our thoughts, even prevent rambling maybe. Daniel also prayed using scripture – and we can probably recognise when others do (Esther 4:14 – who prays this?).

We are praying to an infinite God who is holy and sends the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts. How does the HS feel living in hearts where there are bits not yet yielded to God? For example if we can't get our relationship right with our spouse how can we get it right with God?

We should note that the Bible says what it says not for other people but for **me!** There is much in the Bible about our sin - not just that of the Israelites - does any apply to us? Solomon said there is no one who does not sin (Prov 20:9) but God in contrast is fully righteous and good. His punishment is real yet if we turn in faith to Jesus and away from sin we can live in peace with Him. So maybe we have some work to do in confession and allowing God into all our lives so that we might pray more effectively.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

What does Daniel's prayer contain – don't just read the words from the passage “categorise” each part. EG verse 4 could be “Adoration to God”. How can this help with praying through other scriptures?

Which part of the prayer suggests Daniel might be “praying through” a scripture? How does scripture help you to pray?

Michael mentioned the “ABC” of corporate prayer - what does each letter stand for and which challenges you the most in speaking out prayer?

How does the ACTS model for prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanks and Supplication) fit with both Daniel's prayer and that in Luke 11.

The prayer Jesus taught in Luke 11:1-4 is as you'd expect an excellent model – but how can we keep it “alive” and not just a formula? Does this model cover all eventualities – if not what might you add?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Pray now for your “constituency” – for those the group or individuals are reaching out to now. Use what you have learned from Daniel to be as effective as you can.