

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: Any Questions

What is the will of God? Why do bad things happen to good people? How can I face the future? Does prayer really work? Asking questions and having doubts is a normal part of the human experience. We do not have to be ashamed of our doubts or hide our questions before God. In fact, God fully welcomes them and welcomes us. It is even possible that we are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have all the answers.

This Lent, join us as we bring some of our biggest questions and doubts to God. We will practice embracing this deeply human part of ourselves of asking, wondering, and wrestling in the mystery of faith as we move together toward the great and joyous hope of the Easter resurrection.

Message Description:

We know that prayer is powerful. We know we have this line to God, a connection to the Father through Jesus in the power of his Spirit who intercedes for us. We know that God can heal, lead, guide, and answer us when we call. And yet, much of how prayer "works" is a great mystery. When and how God's divine will interacts with human will cannot be plotted or tracked or even guaranteed. Too often our prayers become formulas for blessings, doling out our piety and lists and demanding an answer from God like a vending machine. But maybe, the invitation of prayer is more than that. Maybe prayer is an invitation into the mystery of God; to hold space, to be, to breathe, and to allow the Holy Spirit to be at work in our hearts so that we might become more like Christ. So that we might become the answers to someone else's prayer in the world. **Maybe prayer is more about changing our hearts in the moment than it is about changing our circumstances.**

Key Scripture

Matthew 7:7-11; Matthew 6:5-6; James 5:13-16; Genesis 18:23-33; Philippians 4:4-9; John 15:1-9

Questions based on this week's teaching:

1. Share about a time when you felt your prayers were answered. How did that make you feel?
2. Share about a time when you felt your prayers were *not* answered. How did that make you feel?
3. Read Genesis 18:23-33. Do you believe God's action can be impacted through our prayers? How does Abraham set an example for faithful prayer?
4. Does it change the way you think about prayer to consider it as time with God to transform our hearts more so than our circumstances?
5. Where do you desire to grow in your prayer life right now?

Reflect on John 15:1-17. Read it through meditatively, as if you are abiding in the presence of God as you go.

- What does it mean that Jesus is the vine and the Father is the vinedresser?
- What does it mean for you to be a branch and to bear much fruit?
- What does it look like for you to abide?
- Discuss v 7. What does it mean for God to answer us in this way? Do you think this statement is conditional?

Please be intentional about praying together!

Consider joining us as a house group for one of our Thursday nights of prayer and worship throughout Lent.

Starting February 1 at 7pm, the pastoral team will meet in the lower level at MUMC (enter building A their main sanctuary building) for an intentional time of prayer and worship as we seek God's presence and guidance in this season.

Let us not underestimate the power of our community coming together in an hour of need to pray!

Close in prayer:

Pray together. Create intentional time and space to offer prayers for one another, that we might share in the comfort of Christ together and experience the Spirit's presence.

Consider the simple acronym of ACTS to guide your time of prayer together:

- A- Adoration.** *Share praise reports or reasons to praise God. (Reading a psalm together can help)*
- C- Confession.** *Leave space to pray silently or individually to confess sins.*
- T- Thanksgiving.** *Share something in the group that you are thankful for this week.*
- S- Supplication, or petition.** *Share concerns and prayer requests you have.*