

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Encounter

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Introduction

An encounter with God can empower prayer. Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Paul and others encountered God in powerful ways, and each demonstrated a strong and intimate prayer life. As we encounter the Holy Spirit more deeply, let's consider how this experience can enable us to pray more fervently and effectively.

Read Acts 12:1-19, James 5:13-18.

Discuss

1. Did you encounter God during the weekend services, or have you previously experienced the presence of God in a significant way, that you are able to share? How did that encounter change you?
2. In Acts 12, God performed an amazing miracle in response to prayer. Has God ever answered your prayer in a specific situation? Share this with the group.
3. Praying alone and praying corporately are both important approaches to prayer. In Acts 12, the church prayed with urgency for Peter's deliverance. How is praying with others different from praying alone? See Matthew 18:19-20.
4. Acts 12 states that Herod executed James and went after Peter as he saw how that pleased the Jews, but Peter was miraculously released by God. How do you think the family of James would have felt about this, given the different outcome? What can we learn when God responds to our prayers with a 'no'?
5. What does James 5 tell us about praying effectively? Why are faith and persistence so important? See Luke 18:1.

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6. Why is confession of sin an important aspect of prayer? Read 1 John 1:9 and Psalms 66:18.
7. According to 1 Timothy 2:1-4, who can we pray for and what can we pray for them?

Respond

Gather to pray in smaller clusters (e.g. men and women). If necessary, confess any sins that may hinder your prayers.

As a small group, set aside a dedicated time to pray together in the coming weeks (use the Prayer Room if it is locally accessible for you - book at www.crossway.org.au/247). Pray for the nation, state leaders, church leaders, families, and other loved ones.