

PRAY & WONDER – Pray intensively

ICE BREAKER

What does it mean to pray 'intensively'?

- a) Many words?
- b) Speaking quickly?
- c) Screaming loudly?
- d) Telling God what he should do?
- e) ???

Next Sundays

16/08/15	Vision Sunday – Coming Home
23/08/15	pray & wonder – Encircle your miracle
30/08/15	pray & wonder – Dream big
06/09/15	Guest Speaker – Layne Schranz
13/09/15	pray & wonder – Pray intensively
20/09/15	pray& wonder – Think long-term
27/09/15	pray & wonder – Don't give up

Also watch the weekly Smallgroup video under [Smallgroup Blog](#).

SUMMARY OF THE MESSAGE

Do you have a request, desire, dream, etc. which Jesus has not answered or given a solution to for years. Then perseverance and persistence are needed.

(Ex. World-class soloists practice a lot more than average musicians, they are persistent!)

In many examples in the Bible perseverance played a big role. Most of the time a 'no' came first. But they persevered! (Ex. Elijah prayed for rain; he looked 6 times, but still nothing happened. Also with Jericho the walls only tumbled down at the 7th time! – Giving up was not their thing.

1 Kings 18:43-44

"Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "Go back." The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea."

We allow circumstances and problems to come between God and us, instead of placing God between us and our circumstances and problems.

However, often we experience emptiness, nothing happens. Perseverance is needed!

Deuteronomy 8:3

"He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."

Example 'grammar', where we don't finish writing a sentence and end with ..., which is an impulse to continue thinking.

Where do we save the unanswered prayers? Under 'disappointments' or under 'trusting'?

I trust even if I don't have any claim. Deuteronomy 8:3 teaches us, that God wants to write a personal history with us. – We learn to live from the source 'Jesus'!

Understand God's grammar

Quote:

Don't set a point where God sets a comma, and don't set a comma where God sets a point.

John 11:21-22

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

Lazarus's death was a decisive experience for Martha and Mary. But Martha did not set a point, but a comma: God can still do something out of it.

Preventative faith

John 11:21

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

'Preventative' means, that when God helps, then things are good for us. Actually we are keeping it under our control. Martha, however, had a different dimension of faith:

Resurrection faith

John 11:22

"But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

Pray promise-oriented

1 Kings 18:42

"Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees."

Elijah did not look at the circumstances (he hid his face), but trusted in God's intervention.

REFLECTION / SHARING

At the beginning read the whole story of Lazarus's resurrection: John 11:1-45.

Let's focus on verses 21+22:

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

This is noteworthy:

Not only Martha, but also Mary (verse 32) were influenced by the 'if, then':

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "*Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.*"

Do we know this (human) concept 'if, then'?

- How and in which form?
- Who has a practical experience?
- Or are we not even conscious of this?

Understand God's grammar

1. He (often) lets our ideas burst ... (example ICF: our dream location 'Güterbahnhof' burst) ... so that we can move further, this means that we say BUT, like Martha.
2. And we learn that there is a NEVERTHELESS (verse 22: ... but I know that even now ...)
3. Then we intensively begin to pray, and that promise-oriented... and new paths will open up! (For ICF: Maag – SihlCity – Event-Park)

- Which ideas have burst in our personal lives?
- In which situations did I learn the NEVERTHELESS?

With Jesus the 'promise' is fulfilled

With Lazarus's resurrection Jesus leads us into an even deeper dimension of BUT and NEVERTHELESS (John 11:25+26):

To the **BUT**:

It is our knowledge: Jesus is the resurrection and the life!

To the **NEVERTHELESS**:

It is our faith: The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

- Do you believe this? - Jesus also asks us this question!

PRAYER

Praying intensively = praying promise-oriented = depending on the BUT and NEVERTHELESS

Practice this with an example:

- Each person takes a prayer request.
- Then write 'BUT' to it, meaning which 'other fact' do I know?
- And a 'NEVERTHELESS', meaning what can God do despite all the impossibilities?

Share about what you found out – and then pray precisely like this.

And in addition...

An ICF song says: "All I need is me close to you ... to be close to Jesus... So, it is ultimately not about material and physical things, but about the spiritual dimension: Life with Jesus!"

ACTION STEPS

In the following week take notice...

1. ... of your **behaviour**: Where are there 'if, then' excuses?
2. ... of your **prayer**: Is it 'intensive', meaning with BUT and NEVERTHELESS?
3. ...of your **thoughts**: How much place does 'Jesus is the resurrection and the life' have?
4. ...of your **faith**: Does it create life? (The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.)



HEARTBEAT for Smallgroup leaders

PRAY & WONDER

God loves getting in contact with us and having fellowship with us. When we pray, we expect small things from God and often also great things. But how can we experience miracles with him? How can you pray and be amazed by what God is doing? A message series on wondering. About God's love for us.

Warm wishes,

Your Smallgroup team

Preparation:

Test your goals:

- (1) The goal of the Smallgroup work is to help people strengthen their personal relationship with Jesus and live in real fellowship with one another.
- (2) Which people in my Smallgroup do I encourage to be leaders? Which opportunities to practice do I provide for them?
- (3) Which goal do I set for the Smallgroup meeting?

Apply these three values to your Smallgroup:

Community, experiencing God, multiplication (internal and external growth).

Consider how these three values are put into practice in the next small group meeting.

Pray for your Smallgroup:

- Pray for your members and their concerns.
- Pray that each has an encounter with God and that you may all achieve your goals together.
- Consciously submit yourself under God's leadership so that the evening may take place according to his will.

Plan your Smallgroup meeting:

- Consider what you will delegate (administration, hospitality/food, prayer, worship, input ...).
- Everybody should be informed where and when the meeting is taking place. Communication is a matter of leadership!

Count on God's presence:

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20