Connect Group Prayer Exercise – January 1-7, 2017

“Beginning the 2017 Year in Prayer”

***BEING PRAYERFUL, and HELPLESS, BEFORE GOD***

In his book, *A Praying Life (NAVPress)*, Paul Miller urges us to become before God what we often try NOT to be – helpless. He writes:

*Little children are good at helplessness. It’s what they do best. But as adults, we soon forget how important helplessness is. I, for one, am allergic to helplessness. I don’t like it. I want a plan, an idea, or maybe a friend to listen to my problem. This is how I instinctively approach everything because I am confident in my own abilities. This is even true in my work of teaching people about prayer. Even though I lead prayer seminars and wrote a study on prayer, up until a year ago, it never occurred to me to pray systematically and regularly for our prayer ministry. Why not? Because I was not helpless. I could manage our prayer ministry on my own. I never said this or even thought it, but I lived it. Ironically, helplessness is one of the central themes in our prayer seminar. I wasn’t helpless about the ministry of teaching helplessness! Such is the human heart. I only started praying regularly about our seminar ministry when it wasn’t moving forward—when I became helpless.*

In Chapter 12, Miller urges us to understand this:

***PRAYER = HELPLESSNESS***

*God wants us to come to him empty-handed, weary, and heavy-laden. Instinctively we want to get rid of our helplessness before we come to God. One participant of our prayer seminars put it this way: “I am starting to see there is a difference between “saying prayers” and honest praying. Both can sound the same on the outside, but the former is too often motivated by a sense of obligation and guilt; whereas the latter is motivated by a conviction that I am completely helpless to ‘do life’ on my own. Or in the case of praying for others, that I am completely helpless to help others without the grace and power of God.*

Mature Christians are keenly aware that they can’t raise their kids. It’s a no-brainer. Even if they are perfect parents, they still can’t get inside their kids’ hearts.

Miller, Paul, A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World.

In your Connect Group this week, spend it as a follow up session out of today, in prayer.

#1 Discuss the following questions:

* Does your praying life need a tune up as you head into 2017?
* Do you think we hesitate to pray because we don’t truly feel helpless?
* How might John 15:1-5 (especially vs. 5) help correct our independence?

#2 Pray together “helplessly” for the things (a) you know are on God’s heart, and (b) the things which are important to your life.

Thanks for starting the year in prayer! *Pastor David Staff*