**Fellowship CommUnity Group**

 **Discussion Guide for Leaders**

*Series: Lord, Teach Us to Pray*

*Sermon: “Formidable Prayer” (10-7-18)*

**Group Announcements (Leaders: Please review prior to start)**

**1)** Welcome everyone to your group.

**2) Leaders: Please note special instructions for prayer time.**

1. **Getting To Know Each Other** *Please use these questions as a time for people to informally talk and get to know each other.*

Go around the room and have everyone answer this question: **Which do you prefer to watch: Sunrise or Sunset? Why?** (Be as specific as you can)

* **Opening Prayer**. (Either leader, host home or someone who is willing to pray out loud)

*(Notes from message for reference only – use only as needed)*

**\*\***Use Sermon notes bulletin insert

* **Formidable Commands (Matthew)**
* 1)Love your enemies.
* 2) Pray for those who persecute you.
* **Formidable Commands (Luke)**
* 1) Love your enemies
* 2) Do good to those who hate you
* 3) Bless those who curse you
* 4) Pray for those who abuse **you**
* **Why must Christians love their enemies, do good to haters, bless those who curse others, and why must we pray for those who abuse and persecute?**

**The Reason**: Because the one who calls us to this gave us the example to follow.

* **Into The Text** (15 Minutes) (Leaders: This time is not meant to be application yet, this is time in the Word, before we seek to apply truth, we need to understand the meaning of the text. The section after this one will focus on application.)

1. Ask someone to read Matthew 5:43-48. *Ask*: *How do you think Jesus’ audience would have responded to the command to love their enemies and to pray for their persecutors? Why would have this been especially hard for Jews living in first century Palestine? Why did Jesus say ‘so that’ in v45?*
2. Ask someone to read Luke 6:27-31. *Ask: What does Luke add to his account that Matthew did not mention? Does Jesus make it clear here that his followers will face enemies, hate, cursing and abuse? How so? Why is Jesus making that so clear?*
3. Read the following passages and discuss the ridicule, mockery and scorn that Jesus endured*. Luke 23:7-11; Mark 15:16-20; Mark 15:21-32*

**Application & Discussion** (15-20 Minutes)

1. Say: Let’s move to application. *Ask: How do you typically respond to your enemies? How does Christ’s example of enduring mockery help you to handle persecution and being treated poorly?*
2. *Ask: Have you ever tried to consistently pray for your enemy? How did that go? What did God do in you as you prayed that way? What did God do in your enemy?*
3. *Ask: What needs to come first – loving your enemy or forgiving your enemy? Does one lead to the other? How did Jesus describe it?*
4. *Ask:* *In light of Jesus teaching us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute and abuse us – where do we draw the line? Is there a line?*
5. *Ask: How did Steve Saint’s testimony impact you?*

**\*\*Prayer Time**: **(Leader Say:**)

* We will now close with a time of prayer.
* As we have done before, ask someone to start and then have each person go around the room and pray a one sentence prayer out loud to the Lord, with all of your heart: This sentence can either be prayed as is or in your own words.
* Make sure everyone knows who is starting the prayer and the direction you are going.
* The sentence is…. *“Lord, I pray for those who have hurt me, help me to forgive them, to love them and to continue to pray for them.”* (encourage those uncomfortable with praying out loud to pray that simple sentence)
* *(****Leader****: Encourage those uncomfortable with praying out loud to try this, even if it is just a short sentence, they can still pass if they choose but do ask for this prayer to go around the room in a certain order so everyone knows – give room for learning to pray)*
* Once everyone has prayed this prayer in their own words, you can either open it up for prayer or just close. Lord, teach us to pray.