

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Just Stop and Thank!

Questions written by Pastor Miles McPherson
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Would you like to lead or host a small group? Our next Small Group Training is Saturday, December 1 and 8. For details or to register, go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/3512/>.

Thanksgiving Outreach for the Homeless is this Saturday, November 17 and we're still in need of 175 people for our Outreach Teams. This would be a great opportunity for your entire small group to work together. For details or to register to volunteer, go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/3504/>.

For all other Rock events, please go <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MINISTRY PRAYER REQUESTS

As "small groupies," you are the heart and soul of this ministry--who better than you to lift up the Small Group Ministry in prayer? So, it's up to you, you can spend time in your small group praying for these things (weekly or occasionally), or you can pray during the week on your own time. And if you'd like to be added to our Pastor's Prayer Team, just let us know. Mark Collins, the Small Group Pastor, would love your prayers! We send out a monthly email of his personal and ministry prayer requests. Just contact Andy Rodgers at andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org. May God work through your prayers mightily!

Reaching the Lost: Please pray that God would continue to draw the lost both to the Rock and our small groups.

Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups: Pray for perseverance, wisdom, and guidance for our small group leaders as they lead their groups this fall season. Pray that our small groups would truly be a place to grow in deep relationship with God and one another.

Potential Small Group Leaders: Pray for those who have signed up over the last month expressing interest in leading and/or hosting a small group; training and deployment are the next steps.

Small Group Staff: Pray that God would renew our strength and give us His vision for small groups as we continue our planning for 2008.

The Rock Body: Let's give thanks for how God has moved in our church and community to come together and help those affected by the recent fires. Please also pray that our church body would continue to be a source of encouragement and support for those in need.

MEMORY VERSE

Everyday they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all people. Acts 2:46-47

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – JUST STOP AND THANK!

We live at an adrenaline-filled pace in the 21st century. Especially here in SoCal we love living life to the extreme. One of the ways that our culture can negatively affect us is it's tendency to never slow down and not take time to ponder all the great things God has done in our lives. Living here in the land of freedom and expression, it's easy to begin to think that the gifts God has given us are actually inalienable rights rather than great miracles from a loving God. This attitude tends to permeate our spiritual lives. Biblical freedoms have become rights that are more important than service and responsibility. Here at the Rock we have been on the receiving end of many, many miracles. In fact, if we were not careful our hearts can grow cold towards the amazing things that God has performed in our midst or we might even take the credit for them. When Jesus walked the earth, His people began overestimating themselves, rather than standing in awe of an awesome God.

Jesus' mother, Mary, had few rights and minimal privileges in her culture and her religion. She was probably the last person to expect to be the mother of the Messiah. She was overwhelmed that God could choose such an unlikely person to have such a role in the redemption of the world. Mary was aware of the personal cost of carrying a child before marriage, yet she never thought God's plan was unfair. Instead she prayed, thanking God for the privilege of her calling.

Getting Started

1. In what kinds of circumstances have you found it most difficult to express thanks God?

Digging Deeper

2. Read Luke 1:39-55. This portion of Scripture is referred to by scholars as the "magnificent," because of young girl's response to a personally difficult calling to one of the greatest miracles in all of history. Mary demonstrates the proper human response to God's activity in our lives. What does this passage show us about what Mary thought God was like?
3. Read Luke 1: 45.
 - a. Can someone share a time when you were told something by God that was hard for you to believe (specifically being used by Him in some way)?
 - b. Why do you think Mary was blessed because of her belief? What was her response? Do you think her response helped her faith?

4. Read Luke 1: 46-47.
 - a. What does this passage show us about how Mary saw herself before God?

 - b. This verse says that “Mary rejoiced in her Savior” (by writing a song). How is God using you in ways that you’ve never even dreamed of? What are some creative ways your group can rejoice like Mary did?

5. Read Luke 1: 50.
 - a. This verse tells us that God’s mercy extends to those who fear Him. How does your “fear” of God affect the way you pray to Him? How did Mary’s response show us about her understanding of God?

6. Read Luke 1: 51.
 - a. In what ways do these verses both reassure us and act as a warning to us?

 - b. How can God’s faithfulness to Mary be a basis for us to believe He can use us in miraculous ways?

7. Read Luke 1: 52-53.
 - a. Who are the “proud,” the “rulers,” and the “rich” who God did not choose to use? Why do you think He chose you to help redeem the world? How should you respond to His choice?

 - b. Can you think of some practical ways you could elevate an “attitude of gratitude” in your life? What do you think would be the result?

Bringing it Home

8. As a group, make a list of some of the great things that God has done in your past and recent history (in the last month). How has God used you in new ways? Ask God to show you new directions that He may be taking the group as a whole. Spend a lot of time just thanking Him.