

# It Is Not Easy

" Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!" Matthew 26:41

## Opening Prayer

**Check-In** (Share Prayer Experience)

## Video (optional)

1. " I will bring that group through the fire and make them pure. I will refine them like silver and purify them like gold. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'These are my people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.'"

**Zechariah 13:9**

Most adults , even pious adult, find it difficult to pray at times. Some of us find it difficult to pray most of the time. If you are in this group, don't feel alone. You have lots of company. Numerous reasons have been cited for this. Just a few of these reasons include: praying is boring, it is not cool, an unwillingness to devote the necessary time to commune with God, a lack of discipline, an inability to be still and quiet for more than a few minutes, impatience with the time God may take to respond, worldly temptations, our own lack of obedience to the will of God, a lack of faith, and a lack of humility. One or several of these reasons may apply to making prayer difficult for us.

**Do you find prayer hard to do? 1. Not at all. 2. Sometimes. 3. Most of the time.**

**Why do you think prayer can be so hard to do? What is your personal experience?**

2. " Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: 'Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee

stood by himself and prayed this prayer: I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.

But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner. I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'" **Luke 18:9-14**

We acknowledge that prayer is sometimes difficult, even for those whom we think of as saints. The challenge for us is to find ways to make our time in prayer less of a discipline and more of a pleasure that we anticipate, in the same way we anticipate going to see a loving parent. We should also remember that we pray in many acts, not just the time we set aside specifically to "pray." **How can we make prayer a joy rather than an obligation? List specific approaches.**

## **Closing Observations**

### **Assignment(s): Daily Prayer for Twenty Minutes**

#### **Practice Leading Prayer**

" And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song with these words: "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.." **Revelation 5:8-9**

## **Sharing Prayer Needs**

### **Closing Prayer**

All Bible quotes are from the New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.