



## Small Group Notes for The Joy Manual: Community

### Discovering Together

Describe a time God gave you a leading that you followed. What happened when you were obedient to this prompting?

Did you ever receive a leading but you were too busy or distracted to respond. How did you feel when you realised you missed a divine prompting?

### Learning Together

Prayer is such an important power In the concentration camp, seven hundred of us lived in a room built for two hundred people. We were all dirty, nervous and tense. One day a horrible fight broke out amongst the prisoners. Betsie began to pray aloud. It was as if a storm laid down, until at last all was quiet. Then Betsie said, "Thank you, Father." A tired old woman was used by the Lord to save the situation for seven hundred fellow prisoners through her prayers.

There may be days of darkness and distress,  
When sin has power to tempt, and care to press.  
Yet in the darkest day I will not fear  
For 'midst the shadows,  
You will still be near  
Thank You Lord Jesus.

—Corrie ten Boom, Each New Day (Revell, 1977)

Philippians 1:1-11

1. What is the spirit of Paul's prayer for the followers of Christ at the church in Philippi?
2. What are some of the specific thanks and petitions Paul lifts up in prayer for the Philippian Christians?
3. How can the spirit and content of Paul's prayer influence your prayer life?
4. Paul was certain that the work God had begun in the lives of the Philippian Christians would come to completion (grow to maturity). What is a work God is doing in you that you long to see come to completion?
5. How can your small group members pray for you, encourage you, and keep you accountable as you grow in this specific area of your life?
6. What steps are you taking to protect your "possessions"? What measure are you using to ensure that your relationships are strong and healthy? What are you doing to solidify the bridges between you and those in your world?...

Many wealthy people have died paupers because they gave their lives to things and not to people. And many paupers have left this earth in contentment because they loved their neighbours.

—Max Lucado, *On the Anvil* (Tyndale, 1985)

7. In your own words, how would you describe Paul's feelings for the Christ followers in the church at Philippi?

8. Tell about a fellow follower of Christ whom you love deeply and "carry in your heart." How has this person enriched your life?

9. Paul was in jail and could not freely visit or communicate with his friends. If you knew that you were going to be imprisoned tomorrow for your faith and not see your small group members for a full year, what would you want to tell them before the police came to take you away?

Prayer has as much power today. God has not changed; and His ear is just as quick to hear the voice of real prayer, and His hand is just as long and strong to save, as it ever was.... Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God's infinite grace and power. All that God is, and all that He has, is at the disposal of prayer. But we must use the key. Prayer can do anything that God can do, and as God can do anything, prayer is omnipotent.

—R. A. Torrey, *The Power of Prayer* (Revell, 1924)

10. What specific requests did Paul lift up for the followers of Christ at Philippi?

11. Choose one of the requests Paul lifted up and express why you think it is still important for Christ followers to pray this way for each other.

12. What does the life of a follower of Christ look like when their "love is abounding more and more" (v. 9)?

## **Serving Together**

What is one practical act of love you can extend to another person in the coming week?

How can your small group members pray for you as you extend, the love of Jesus through this action?

Take time as a group to pray for each other using the core areas of prayer Paul lifted up in this passage. Look at your answers to question eight. Use this as a guide to pray for each other by name.

Take time in the coming week to lift up prayers of thanksgiving for each of these people. Also, drop a note, e-mail, or make a phone call to one or two of these people and remind them how much you appreciate them and their partnership in the gospel.

Pray for God to open a door for you to extend His love to a seeker—someone who has questions about God but is not yet a Christ follower. Commit to invest love and time in this person's life.