

GROW. PRAY. STUDY.
First United Methodist Church- Weekly Study Guide
“equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians ”

24 Hours that Changed the World
“Agony is Not Defeat”
March 21-26

*32 They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." 35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." 37 He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? 38 Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. 41 He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand." **Mark 14:32-42***

Difficult, agonizing moments in life can often times overwhelm us. They tempt us to give up and lose hope....realizing things are out of our hands, but causing us to lose sight of the fact God is with us. The scene in our reading yesterday offers a moment of great agony for Jesus....as he stresses over the fate that awaits Him on the cross. He reminds us, however, that agony doesn't mean defeat....it simply opens up an opportunity to see God at work in our lives.

This week we are going to spend our study guide re-examining this scene in the Garden as Jesus prayed. We will think about what it means to be filled with agony and how we can find great comfort in strength in turning to and trusting God. Spend some time each day this week thinking about your life and how you can find hope in turning your fears and stress over to God.

Monday – Read Mark 14:32

Nelson's Life Application Bible says Jesus chose a familiar place of work of which to pray one of his final prayers. Do you have a familiar place of prayer at home and/or at work; a place you can retreat to when you are stressed or just to relax and enjoy the presence of the Spirit? Have you ever tried praying through tense situations at work? Why or why not?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Tuesday – Read Mark 14:34

In this passage we see Jesus wrestling with his humanness. What words does your Bible use to describe his emotional state? I have found so often I am moving so fast it is difficult for me to be in touch with how I am feeling. And yet, Jesus shows us that he dealt with his emotion. Can you express your emotional state today?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Wednesday- Read Mark 14:38

In The Message translation of the Bible this verse reads: *“Can’t you stick it out with me a single hour? Stay alert, be in prayer, so you don’t enter the danger zone without even knowing it. Don’t be naïve. Part of you is eager, ready for anything in God; but another part is lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire.”* Jesus was teaching the disciples the ways only the Spirit of God, through prayer, could help them avoid sin. He was teaching them in our natural human condition we have a propensity to sin. How can a deep relationship with Christ help you push back against this nature to sin?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Thursday- Read Matthew 26:43-45.

Jesus in the garden appears in Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46 and Matthew 26:36-45. In all of these accounts it appears the disciples struggle to remain faithful. Yet, Jesus does not just throw up his hands in disgust and leave them in the garden as he goes to face his death. Do you stick with people even though they stumble? Who in your circle of influence needs the bright possibilities of God to shine on them today? Ask God to bless them with encouragement and hope today. Will God use you to extend it? Are you open to allowing God to use you?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Friday – Read Mark 14:35-36.

This is Jesus prayer of relinquishment and surrender. John Wesley was the founder of Methodism; a phrase in his covenant prayer has him expressing to God: *“I am thine, O Lord, and you are mine. Put me to what you will.”* If you were relinquishing your life to God, what would you need to let go of? Are you ready to let go? Why or why not?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

Saturday- Read Mark 14:53-72

Today you will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a powerful worship experience as we come together tomorrow as the body of Christ.

I invite you to pray the following prayer:

Dear God,

As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ's name I pray, AMEN

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN