**Sermon Based Small Group: Matthew 6:5-15**

**Base Camp 3: Life Giving Prayer**

***FOCUS***

* Life has many simple pleasures. One of them is sleep. Think of the last few weeks. When did you have a great sleep? When did you have a restless night?
* When have you felt prayer to be life-giving? If you feel comfortable, share that experience with the group.

***REST***

* Let’s remember what our study is about. It is about building our Base Camp: a Daily, Life-Giving Time to Intentionally Engage God.
  + How are you doing? What is going well? What could you do better?
  + Is this life-giving?
* Read verses 5 to 8.
* What did you think of the “Don’ts” of prayer (6:5 and 7)?
  + Jesus wants to expose two tendencies of our hearts that lead to life-sucking prayer.
  + **We pray to show our spiritual superiority**, and
  + **We pray to satisfy our self-interested hearts**.
  + Compare the prayers of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14).
* A simple prayer from a pure heart: Pastor Mel referred to prayer as “Transactional” or “Relational.” How would you describe each of these approaches to prayer? Most of us have prayed both ways. Talk about your experiences both ways.
* Have you ever prayed from the “Self Interest Vortex”? Does God know what we need even before we ask? Think about that. How is the self interest vortex life sucking?
  + Have you ever thought of coming to God with our own interests first as idolatry? Is it?
* **Prayer that will not lead to rest will never be life-giving.** What does it mean to work from rest rather than for rest? Have you ever thought about that?
* What do you think of prayer as a life giving mini vacation (Matthew 11:28)? Empowering prayer allows you to work from life-giving rest.

***[RE]-ALIGNMENT***

* Read verses 9 and 10.
* ***Prayer that leads to Rest, Life-giving Prayer, involves two things:*** 
  + We pray to God, holy, awed, who is on the throne (in heaven). Talk about the greatness and majesty of God, Creator and Sovereign Lord, whose value is ultimate. This is to whom we pray.
  + We pray to our Father. What changes when we think of God as our Father? These two ideas (God’s glory and approachability) stand in contrast.
  + Our Father is the life-giving One who knows what we need before we ask!
  + Re-alignment comes when we hallow our Father. This leads us into the prayer.
* Re-alignment really describes our approach to prayer. To counter self-righteousness and self-interest we begin with a focus on who God really is. What will you do to bring about re-alignment?
* Verse 10, May your kingdom come..., defines our goal, that our prayer reflects our commitment to God. How do these two phrases guide our prayer. How do they counteract the “Don’ts” in verses 5 to 8?
  + Read John 15:7, 10. How does God’s will affect our prayer? The Bible helps us to see God’s will? How do Bible reading and prayer connect?
  + Pastor Mel suggested a pattern to use as we read the Bible:
    - Read
    - Examine: What does it say?
    - Apply:
      * What does this say or imply about the God with whom I want to be aligned?
      * How would I see myself and life around me today if I aligned myself with, in and under that God?
      * What is one thing I could do today to show I believed that?
    - Pray

***RELEASE***

* Read verses 11 to 15.
* Life-giving prayer is prayer that takes all of life that is important to us,today,and says to God, “I am entrusting this into your control today.”
* Paul describes this well in Philippians 4:4-7. Read these verses. Compare them to the Lord’s prayer.
* Does this happen all at once?
* Specifically Jesus mentions three core areas to release to God
  + Daily provisions: Give God the credit for giving us what we need.
  + Daily pardon: God forgives us. When we understand God’s forgiveness we can forgive others.
  + Daily protection (from temptation): How does the “selfish gene” color our approach to God and life?
* How does release become life-giving, leading to a place of rest?

***REHEARSE***

* Let’s try something different to start today. Read through the Lord’s Prayer. Actually, start in the verses just before the prayer. Go around your group, taking turns, and read one phrase at a time. Stop after each phrase and quietly think or pray. The first two phrases are simplified. Then the next person, when it feels appropriate, will read out the next phrase. Work your way through the prayer.
  + God, give me a simple prayer from a pure heart.
  + Father, You know what I need before I ask.
  + Our Father in Heaven,
  + Hallowed be Your Name,...