

Westwood Baptist Church *Grounded. Growing. Going.*



Worship Guide for January 7, 2024

Sermon Notes

Jesus' Prayer for Westwood in 2024

John 17:20-26 (pew Bible pg. 903)

The gospel of John ends with what is known as the “farewell discourse”. In Chapters 13–17, John records for us Jesus’ “farewell discourse”. On the evening before His crucifixion, Jesus informs His disciples what will take place after His departure, tells them what they should expect from the world, and reveals rich truth about His relationship with His Father. The section ends with Jesus’ high priestly prayer. After praying for Himself (Jn 17: 1-5) and His disciples there with Him in the upper room (Jn 17: 6-19), Jesus looks into the future and prays for the church in the ages yet to come. Jesus looks into the future and prays for us. In His prayer for us, Jesus prayed primarily for one thing – our unity. As we begin this new year, we need to be reminded that our success does not rest in our numerical strength, our financial ability, our public visibility, or our physical facilities. Jesus knew that the church’s supernatural unity was vital for the success of the church’s mission in the world. That is why He prayed for the unity of the church. That is why He prayed for the unity of Westwood.

Jesus Prays for Our Unity

The final portion of Jesus’ prayer in John 17 is dominated by one single thought – the unity of the church. The pattern for this unity is seen in the Godhead – the relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus prayed, “*that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us*”. (Jn. 17:21) Christians are drawn to one another because they are drawn to a common center – Jesus Christ Himself. The glue that holds believers together is nothing less than God Himself.

Jesus Prays for the Impact of Our Unity

The impact of a unified church is what Jesus prayed for next. “*that they may be one...so that the world may believe that You sent Me.*” (Jn. 17:21) A truly unified community of people is a supernatural reality that can only have a supernatural cause – Jesus Christ! The unity of God’s people will convince the world of the reality of God’s love and the validity of the gospel message. The love of Christ experienced in and through His people draws in a lost and unloved world.

Jesus Prays for the Unending Glory of Our Unity

Finally, Jesus prays that one day we will be with Him in heaven and will experience the fullness of His eternal glory. “*Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me;*” (Jn 17:24) That glory is the uninterrupted, unhindered, outwardly visible expression of the love and unity of the Godhead – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. “*Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is.*” (1 Jn 3:2)

Applications for Us Today

Life Group Preparation Guide

"Let the *Word* of Christ *dwell* in you(all) *richly*
teaching and *admonishing* one another in all *wisdom...*"

- *Colossians 3:16a*

Focus #1: GOD

1. What does this passage reveal about the character or nature of God?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's eternal plans and purposes?
3. What does this passage reveal about how God interacts with his creation?

Focus #2: ME

4. How does this passage reveal sin in my own mind, heart, or life?
5. In what ways does this passage help us to see how we need to be aligned with God's will?
6. What is one tangible and measurable way that the Spirit is leading me to respond to his Word?

Focus #3: OTHERS

7. What is one truth that I can share meaningfully with someone, and with whom?
8. How can I specifically encourage someone or everyone in my Life Group from this passage?

Three contributions (reflections, questions, observations, etc.) I plan to include in our next Life Group discussion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Westwood Staff

Gerald Hodges: Lead Pastor
Jonathan Taylor: Associate Pastor
Jason Engle: Pastor of Students
& Discipleship

Yvonne Hager: Executive Assistant

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JANUARY

10 Life Group Kick Off @ 6:00pm
11 Ladies Spring Bible Study @ 9:30am
22 GriefShare Begins @ 6:30pm
25 Red Cross Blood Drive 10:30am-3pm

FEBRUARY

3 Women's Ministry Event
10 Sportsman's Banquet @ 6:30pm
17-19 Student Ministry Winter Retreat