

# Westwood Baptist Church *Grounded. Growing. Going.*

Worship Guide for December 31, 2023

## Sermon Notes

### **Jesus' Prayer for Westwood in 2024**

John 17:20-26

The gospel of John ends with what is known as the “farewell discourse”. In Chapters 13 – 17, Jesus informs his followers 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 discourse ends with Jesus’ high priestly prayer. On the night before His crucifixion, after praying for Himself (John 17:1-5), Jesus prayed for His disciples there with Him in the upper room (John 17:6-19). But beyond that, he saw into the future and prayed for the church in the ages yet to come. In His prayer for us, Jesus prayed for only one thing – the unity of His followers.

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 our unity would ensure the success of the church’s mission in the world. That is why Jesus prayed for the unity of the church. That is why Jesus 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 the world may believe that You sent Me*” (Jn. 17:21). A truly unified community of people is a supernatural fact that can only have a supernatural cause. The world is so divided and segregated that a unified church compels the world to confess that God is at work among them. The unity of God people will convince the world of the validity of the gospel message. This kind of love and unity draws in a lost and unloved world.

#### **Jesus Prays for the Glory of Our Unity**

Finally Jesus prays that the present church on earth and the future church in heaven will see His glory – the visible manifestation of His divine attributes. That glory is the outward, visible expression of the love between the Father and the Son. “*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;*” (John 17:24). The purpose in showing us His glory was that “they may be one” (Jn. 17:22). Even now, when we get our eyes off of ourselves and one another, and behold the revealed glory of God in Christ, we are supernaturally bound together in unity.

## 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

#### Contact Us

(336)599-1982  
westwoodroxboro@gmail.com  
www.westwoodfamily.org  
Church Office Hours:  
Monday - Friday 8:30am-4:00pm  
Mailing Address:  
970 Leasburg Road  
Roxboro, NC 27573-5470

**TODAY - FINAL DAY** Lottie Moon  
Christmas Offering & Lottie Moon Post Office

#### JANUARY

1 Happy New Year - Church Office Closed  
10 Life Group Kick Off @ 6:00pm  
11 Ladies Spring Bible Study @ 9:30am  
22 GriefShare Begins @ 6:30pm

#### FEBRUARY

3 Women's Ministry Event  
10 Sportsman's Banquet @ 6:30pm