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*Hey leaders! We hope you were challenged and encouraged by “[Anxious For Nothing](#)”. It’s our hope and prayer that your group will continue to share your struggles with one another, confront your insecurities, and experience the life-giving rest that comes when we trust God with worry!*

*We’re excited to begin our Christmas series, “[Away In a Manger](#)”, next week! We’ll take a closer look at the manger—the simple, unexpected place where God’s greatest gift was born. Through the Gospels, we’ll see how the manger is [a sign, a challenge, and an invitation](#) to trust God’s plan. Even when life feels far from perfect, there is joy, hope, and peace waiting when we choose humility and let Jesus lead the way.*

***Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!***

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?  
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or [discipleship@rockbridge.cc](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)

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**“Prayer is how God shares His power with us,  
to really affect things ‘out there’ in the world.”**

[Ben Sternke]

**LEADER RESOURCES || [Leader Note](#)** *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **[Passage Summary](#)**
  - As Paul prepares to go to Jerusalem with a collection for the church that was suffering from a famine, he asks the Roman church to pray specifically for him. The specifics of his request demonstrate that prayer is real participation in Kingdom work and that prayer releases and accesses the actual power, favor, and resources of heaven so that God’s will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- **[Romans 15 Commentary](#) & [Prayer as Participation](#)**
  - Use this commentary and article for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **[Befriending Our Anxiety podcast](#)**
  - Did you know that anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the US, affecting 40 million adults? The good news is we can [invite the peace of Christ](#) into our lives! This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

**ENGAGE & CONNECT || [Leader Note](#)** *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.*

Share how God chose to answer a prayer that took time (afterwards) for you to recognize His goodness, grace, and generosity in (His answer).

**BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note** Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*“I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy.  
Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.”*  
[Psalm 116:1-2]

**BIG IDEA || Leader Note** Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today’s reading and discussion.

In His sovereignty, God has chosen to make prayer indispensable to the doing of His will, and we are graciously invited to participate in this!

**PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note** Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage multiple people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they’re for guidance!

Have someone read aloud Romans 15:25-33. Consider having someone else read the passage again, possibly in a different translation (the CEB and the Message translation provide more modern language).

1. What is the context of Paul’s request for prayer? Why does he seem to be asking for intercession? *Paul is heading to Jerusalem to deliver a collection for believers suffering from famine. He asks the Roman church for prayer, focusing on safety from unbelievers, acceptance by Christians in Jerusalem, and a joyful journey to Rome. This shows prayer as a vital part of accomplishing God’s work.*
2. Paul uses the term “strive together with me in prayers to God on my behalf.” What does this phrase reveal about the nature of interceding for others in prayer? *The phrase emphasizes prayer as a shared effort or spiritual struggle. It suggests that intercessory prayer is not passive but an active, collaborative endeavor that requires earnestness and love.*
3. In the sermon we heard, “*Intercessory prayer is a way of loving others deeply and powerfully.*” How does this kind of prayer demonstrate love for others? How can our group make this more tangible for one another? *Intercessory prayer expresses care by inviting God’s presence and power into someone else’s life. Our group can act on this by intentionally praying for specific needs and checking in with those they pray for to show support.*
4. Paul saw prayer as indispensable to God’s work. How does this perspective challenge or affirm your current view of prayer? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
5. How can our small group cultivate a culture of “striving together” in prayer for one another’s needs and the broader Kingdom mission? *Groups can foster this by setting aside dedicated prayer times, sharing updates on answered prayers, and encouraging vulnerability in sharing needs. Regular intercession builds a sense of unity and purpose.*
6. Reflect on Paul’s prayer requests in v. 30-32. What are specific areas in your life where you need others to “strive together” with you in prayer? *Personal areas might include family, work, health, or spiritual growth. Sharing these needs invites others into the journey and opens the door for collective intercession.*
7. How can you align your prayers with God’s Kingdom purposes in a deeper way, as Paul demonstrates in this passage? *Steps include praying for God’s will over personal desires, focusing on*

*others' needs, and seeking guidance from Scripture to shape prayers. This alignment fosters a Kingdom mindset.*

8. How does Paul's belief in prayer as "indispensable" encourage you to persevere when your prayers seem unanswered? *Paul's faith in prayer's necessity reminds believers that God's timing and methods often differ from expectations. This encourages trust that prayers contribute to God's plans, even if outcomes are unseen.*
9. What does it mean to "release God's power and favor" through prayer? How can this shape your approach to prayer? *This means inviting God's intervention in earthly matters. Viewing prayer as a conduit of God's power inspires bold, faith-filled prayers and a deeper reliance on His sovereignty.*
10. Imagine if God answered all your prayers from the past week. How would the world around you change? How might this reflection inspire you to pray differently? *This exercise highlights the focus of one's prayers—whether they are self-centered or Kingdom-oriented. It encourages broader, more impactful prayers that align with God's purposes for the community and world.*

**STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Our great hope in prayer is not to change what God has planned, but to bring about what He has planned. Significance comes from the blessing and dignity of participation and partnership with God in prayer! Based on the Holy Spirit's wisdom and guidance, what is a step of obedience that you can take this week [to join God and His will IN PRAYER?](#)

**Remember ... God's will WILL be done whether WE pray or not, but His will will NOT be done WITHOUT prayer!**

*Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.*

**PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note** *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5-10 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompts below!*

### **Participating In God's Will**

- Let's take a moment to marvel at the sovereignty of God. In His infinite wisdom, He has chosen to make prayer an indispensable part of accomplishing His will. What an incredible privilege—that the Creator of the universe invites us to partner with Him through prayer!
- As we pray together, let's thank God for this gracious invitation and ask Him to align our hearts with His purposes. Let's seek His guidance and courage to pray boldly, trusting that He works through our prayers to bring about His perfect will.