

LIFE Group Leader Handout

February 9, 2020

Where Has All My Joy Gone?

Iain Kenney

Scripture--see below

Habakkuk 3 v 17-19 - "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will take joy in the God of my salvation."

1 Peter 1 v6-9 - "... you believe in him and rejoice with joy which is inexpressible and filled with glory."

Psalms 4 v6-8 - "You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound"

Main Idea--God Is Our Source of Joy No Matter the Circumstances

How is your level of joy today? (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5

How do you define joy?

What makes you joyful on the outside?

The psalms are filled with joy. Let's read some verses.

- Psalm 95:1-3 Psalm 20:4-6
- Psalm 21:5-7 Psalm 27:5-7
- Psalm 32:10-11

Application--

Take some time to look up the passages above: What is the common theme through these passages in Psalms?

What does Romans 12 v 2 teach us about living in 21st century Long Island?

Tomorrow I want to experience God's joy in _____

Tomorrow I want to show God's love to _____

My LIFE Group has committed to pray for the search for our new Senior Pastor. I am mindful that we shouldn't delegate that commitment to a few minutes of prayer every other week when we meet. I found this very helpful article that will help direct our prayers - in this case specifically for our succession committee. I hope you will also find it useful as you pray, individually and with your groups. -Suzie

What to Pray for Your Search Committee

By Christina Fox - gospelcoalition.org

A few years ago, I served on a pastoral search committee. After the church leadership asked me to serve, I immediately felt the weight of the responsibility to find a pastor for our church. Little did I know what faith-building trials lay ahead for our committee. No matter the church, no matter its size or circumstance, looking for a new pastor is challenging. For members of the search committee, the process involves hours of work: reading resumes, listening to sermons, and interviewing candidates. It also requires pursuing unity of mind and purpose among all the members of the committee. I expected all of that. But there's one thing I didn't anticipate when I agreed to serve on the committee: spiritual attack.

Satan Hates Search Committees

Our adversary, the Devil, doesn't want a search committee to succeed. Consider the goal of a committee: to find a godly pastor to preach God's Word and strengthen His kingdom here on earth. A search committee, then, seeks someone to oppose the works of the Evil One, to speak truth against his lies, and to snatch slaves from his death-grip. As Paul wrote to the Ephesian church: *"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places"* (Eph. 6:12).

From the beginning, our committee made a commitment to fast one day each week. We prayed daily as individuals and together at the start of each meeting, doing as Paul urged—"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:18). We shared our requests with the whole church so they would be praying as well. Alongside God's Word, prayer was the sharpest weapon in our arsenal. Your search committee needs you to pray. They need you to stand against the evil forces at work to undermine their labors. Here are four specific things to pray for:

1. Unity

Pray for the unity of your committee. There are many potential areas for disagreement, both small and big. Members will have to figure out which qualifications are negotiable and which aren't, and what makes for a good sermon. Some will like things about a pastoral candidate that others don't like at all. Some are willing to overlook things about a candidate that others aren't. Unity is essential for the committee. If they aren't united, they'll struggle to settle on a pastor to call. And their disunity will spread to the rest of the church, likely creating wider discord.

2. Spiritual Strength

Spiritual attacks can easily overwhelm a pastoral search. Before I started on the committee, previous members were adamant they didn't want to serve on the committee. I assumed it was because of the time commitment. But I soon realized it had more to do with the spiritual attacks.

Pray for your committee to stand strong. Pray for them to seek Christ in the midst of the many distractions, challenges, and hardships they may face in their personal lives. Pray also for their families—Satan will often attack them as well.

3. Wisdom

Pray for your committee to filter through the many resumes to find the pastor who best fits your church's needs. Pray they'd set aside distractions and secondary issues and focus on what's important. Pray they'd be able to quickly identify pastors who wouldn't be a good fit for your church. Pray for the many decisions they must make.

4. Endurance

The search-committee process is a long process. People will regularly ask, "Why haven't you found someone yet?" The committee will ask themselves the same question. They'll grow weary from the work and discouraged when the applicants don't fit their standards. Pray for your committee members to have endurance to find the pastor you need.

It's a great privilege to serve on a pastoral search committee. But it's also hard work. It's work that keeps committee members from their families. It's work that often breeds disagreement and even discord among the members. But most of all, it's work the Evil One wants to frustrate.

So pray for your church's search committee, making supplication to the Father on their behalf. They need your prayers more than you know.