

SESSION 2 | REVIVING PRAYER _____

Before beginning the study, pray aloud, using either your own words or the words provided.

Father God, fill us with Your reviving love during our time together!

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God ... We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:7, 19)

Revive our love, Lord, for You and for those around us. Amen.

GOD REVIVES HIS PEOPLE THROUGH PRAYER

Read the following text aloud.

Revived people are devoted to prayer. When revived people pray, we declare that God, the Maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible, exists. But prayer proclaims more than God's existence. It professes God's active presence in the world. God is not distant but intimately near to us and His creation.

Prayer also *reasserts*. It preaches the good news to the person who prays and to the person who hears the prayer. Prayer—that often quiet, perhaps unspoken, word to God—defies everything for which the world rages and roars. Prayer restores the heart, revives the mind, and renews the spirit. **Revived people are devoted to prayer**, because in prayer, we are reoriented to God and His reality.

HISTORICAL STUDY *10 minutes*

Either read the text aloud or invite a volunteer to read.

Monica, mother of Augustine, was born in 331 and died in 387. Augustine describes Monica in his *Confessions* as God's handmaid and as a woman who "lived a life of constant prayer."¹ She did. Monica devoted her life to praying for Augustine. She longed for her son to know the living God.

¹ Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (London, England: Penguin Books, 1961), 276.

Augustine eventually believed in God and became a thought-provoking theologian. Reflecting on his mother's life after her death, Augustine remarked, "And yet, O God, who made us both, how could there be any comparison between the honour which I showed to her and the devoted service she had given me?"² Augustine recognized his mother's priceless gift to him—the gift of unceasing, hope-filled prayer.

Discuss at least one of the following two questions.

1. In what ways does Monica's example convict, challenge, or encourage you?
2. Who are some people for whom you could give the "devoted service" of prayer?

Revived people are devoted to prayer. To pray is to hope. Prayer says that God is in control, God is working all things for His glory, God is working justice for the oppressed, and God is making all things new.

ACTIVITY *10 minutes*

In smaller groups of 2-3 people, pray for one another.

Share your current needs and hopes with one another, along with your current thanksgivings. Have one person conclude your prayer by thanking God for the gift of prayer.

DISCUSSION *10 minutes*

Return to the large group to discuss the following question.

- What would you like to be different about your prayer life going forward? Why?

CONCLUSION

Revived people are devoted to prayer. We meet with our loving Father God, awaiting His answer and comfort.

Ask a volunteer to close with prayer.

² Ibid., 292.