*divING DEEPER* **Discussion Guide**

**TEXT SUMMARY**

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Today’s text, **Mark 14:32-42**, recounts Jesus’s prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he died. This sermon on Jesus’s anguished prayer of submission concludes our summer series on prayer.

Nowhere else in Scripture can we see the human side of Jesus more clearly than in his suffering. While we think of the physical and emotional suffering inflicted on him at the hands of his tormenters, the gospel writers’ account of Jesus’s prayer in Gethsemane portray a profound suffering in this prayer, as he wrestled with God about what was coming.

Ultimately, even though Jesus asked repeatedly if there was some other way for God to accomplish His purposes – some way besides the awful abandonment and agony that lay before him – Jesus submitted his will to the will of his Father, laying out the supreme example of the Prayer of Submission.

**INTRODUCTION** (observation)

1. Note the way Mark describes Jesus’s great emotional suffering even *before* he begins to pray.
2. Note how many times Jesus approached his Father with the same request; note that Jesus did *not* get what he asked for from his Father.
3. Note the contrast in the disciples’ inability to focus and support Jesus, even in this hour of his great need.

**READING**

Before reading the text (**Mark 14:32-42**), look through the questions on the back.

**DISCUSSION** (interpretation)

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1. Jesus calls God his “Abba.” While “Abba” isn’t as informal as our “Daddy,” it still conveys the idea of a loving, engaged father. Yet we find Jesus’s “Abba” refusing to give what he so desperately asks for. Why?
2. It is here (v. 38) that we find Jesus making the familiar distinction between the willing-ness of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh. Why was it so difficult for Jesus’s friends to support him in prayer this awful hour of his need?

**SO WHAT?** (application)

Jesus’s example here runs counter to one of the core beliefs of our culture: that we must be true to our deepest desires. In a culture that regards sincerity – being *true to myself* – as the ultimate test of truth, it is difficult for us to see a prayer of submission as anything other than capitulation, a kind of selling out or giving in.

Jesus brought to his Father the great burden of his impending suffering, and he wrestled with God and with his own will over that matter. There was nothing easy about this prayer. Jesus didn’t want to “drink the cup” of his Father’s wrath; his three-fold pleading with God shows us the depth of his anguish. Yet, even though he clearly didn’t *want* to, he still *submitted* to his Father’s will.

How could Jesus submit to his Father’s will and yet (in the language of our culture) be *true to himself*?

***What does it mean to submit to the will of God in a matter in which I have a deep emotional investment?***