

## Questions for Conversations

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James concludes his letter with a focus on prayer.

How does this seem to be a fitting conclusion?

Are there ways this seems to not fit?

The various situations in this passage are interesting: people who are in trouble, sick, and in sin.

What are James' instructions in .13 and .14?

What do you make of verse 15 that the prayer offered in faith for the sick will make them well?

What do you make of the connection in James (and elsewhere in the NT) between sin and sickness or healing and forgiveness?

Have you ever personally experienced (it happened to you) or witnessed (you were there but it did not happen to you) a time when confession in community opened the door to new and fresh opportunities/possibilities?

I like how N. T. Wright states it:

Forgiveness and healing are the two things which seem to push to the fore when we take our stand in the place where prayer makes sense, at the place where heaven and earth overlap, and at the place where our own present time and God's future time overlap. That is, after all, what Christian prayer, and for that matter Christian sacraments, are all about. Prayer isn't just me calling out in the dark to a distant or unknown God. It means what it means and does what it does because God is, as James promised, very near to those who draw near to him. Heaven and earth meet when, in the Spirit, someone calls on the name of the Lord. And it means what it means and does what it does because God's new time

has broken into the continuing time of this sad old world, so that the person praying stands with one foot in the place of trouble, sickness and sin and with the other foot in the place of healing, forgiveness and hope. Prayer then brings the latter to bear on the former.

If Wright is right, why do we neglect prayer so much?

In what ways would you like to grow as a person who prays powerfully?

How could our Christian community (family, DBIC, small group) engage more in prayer?