

Abby Graves

At the beginning of the summer, I had all these plans of how I wanted to start off the year, one of them being attending Friday morning prayer. But during that first week of summer non-vacation (since I was taking two summer classes), I found that I was much busier than I had anticipated, so I didn't really think about it again until that first Thursday night when I realized it was tomorrow, and I just decided to go. So I walked in to the church offices, where I had been only once before during our church membership interviews, and was surprised to see a room full of people. There were faces I recognized, and some that I didn't. Some parents of friends, my youth pastor, people I work with in Children's Ministry... Needless to say, I was the youngest by close to 10 years, but it sort of didn't matter anymore. The fact that I interact with many of these people on a regular basis just made it easier, I guess. And the good-natured atmosphere was so welcoming and refreshing in and of itself. These people were all engaged in such genuine fellowship, despite the hour. I was glad I had come, but I had no idea what kind of healing, fulfillment, and encouragement God was going to bring during the next few hours.

We began the prayer meeting shortly thereafter, and it was just amazing. You could totally tell how open everyone was being, and how sincere their thanksgiving and requests were. I don't know what I had expected, but the prayer time was so genuine and honest, and open. We were all united in a common purpose: to seek our Lord and Savior in prayer and petition, each of us sacrificing sleep and time in order to do so. People prayed for so many things, I couldn't even begin to name them. During the next hour, I noticed something about myself. My heart, slowly and surely, was beginning to soften. I thought, 'Wait a second! It's not like I'm opposed to the gospel or anything! I'm living my life for Christ, right? That's why I'm here! Why is this feeling of surrender coming? Haven't I already done that?' But with each prayer, each reading of scripture, it was these walls I had built up without realizing it were being broken down, brick by brick. Someone read a Psalm about God's comfort. Another blow. "Yes, but are you finding your comfort in Me?" Someone else thanked God for His grace and love, and that even though our hearts become cold and familiar with the Gospel, He never gives up on us. "Are you too familiar with My story? Do you recognize what I do for you daily?" Somebody read from 1 Peter 2, about how our purpose is to proclaim God's name and His excellencies to the world. "Do you remember daily that this is your purpose? Do you strive for it? Do you want it above all else?" After about an hour, we wrapped it up and people started to leave. I think I sat there for a few minutes, awestruck by the humbled state I had entered. It was all kind of a blur, and I can't explain it fully... but I remember thinking about how awesome it was that God had worked so much in such a small amount of time, when I didn't even realize I needed it.