

Praying the News
Session 1 Prompted to PraySteve Berube's Reflection on Praying the News

There is a story that I want to share with you about a time I was at theological school in January or February 1991. It seriously affected how I watch the news.

I walked into the TV lounge and there was a group of guys watching General Colin Powell narrating a video of an American jet attacking an Iraqi tank. The guys whooped and cheered when the missile struck. They were amazed by the technology that led to such an accurate strike.

I was aghast that we had just witnessed the death of at least four or more people inside the tank. I was amazed that these guys, who were studying theology and who were being pushed to ask deeper questions in class, would not ask anything deeper about what a General was telling them.

We see the world through different lenses. The men who died were probably younger than the group watching. They may have been fathers. What would happen to their children? How would the children be affected in the future? How would they feel watching the video? How would they feel toward westerners in the future?

I remember praying that night for the families of those soldiers and I asked God to always keep my eyes open to what was truly going on in a situation. Before I left the room I asked the guys to pray for the families of those whose deaths they had witnessed.

- *The Rev. Steve Berube is a minister with St. Paul's United Church, Riverview, NB. He has a passion for social justice. Steve shares more with us in Session 2: Lens for Listening.*

Questions for Conversation

Choose 2-3 questions that are appropriate to your group and the time you have.

1. What did you hear in the recording that spoke to you today?
2. What do you think? Can praying the news make the world a more peaceful place, a more loving place?
3. The saying about 'praying with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other' is attributed to the theologian Karl Barth. How do you understand this saying?
4. Refer to the participant page and read Steve Berube's reflection on praying the news. Has there been a particular news event that prompted you to pray and compelled you to action? What about the event caused you to pray?
5. What are some ways you keep your heart soft as you listen to the news?