

## Sunday School Lesson

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and went to the Mount of Olives. (Verse 26).

In the Garden  
The name Gethsemane (verse 32), according to The Interpreter's Bible, means "oil press." John says Gethsemane was a garden across the Kidron Valley to which Jesus and his disciples went. (John 18:1) He also tells us that Judas "knew the place" because Jesus and his disciples often met there. (John 18:2)

As Jesus says to his disciples, "Sit here, while I pray" (verse

32), the reader of this account can almost feel his deep loneliness. In the agony of this hour he was entering into a terrible struggle alone. He needed and desired the fellowship of close friends and the fellowship of God. Powerful tensions welled up from within him.

"He took with him Peter and James and John." (Verse 33) These three disciples seem to have had a very close relationship to Jesus, forming an inner circle, so to speak. They had shared in other intimate experiences, including the Transfiguration. (Mark 5:37;

9:2)

When we remember that Jesus was facing the prospect of crucifixion, death, the end of his work, and perhaps failure of his mission, we can understand why he "began to be greatly distressed and troubled." He said to the three disciples, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch." (Verse 34) Jesus greatly needed the support of friends who could enter with him into this ordeal. Grief and heartbreak are evident. Perhaps we shall never really be able to understand it, but Jesus was certain

that it was God's will, and he accepted it.

Jesus did not want to die. At thirty-three he was on the threshold of life. Therefore, he prayed that if it were possible, he might be spared this ordeal. (Verse 35)

In agony of mind and body he prayed, even as you and I would have, that he would not have to face this terrible experience. "Yet not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Verse 36) Thus Jesus accepted the possibility that his prayer might be answered, "No."

When Jesus went back to the

disciples, he found them sleeping. (Verse 37) "Could you not watch one hour?" he asked. Three times Jesus left the disciples to pray. Upon each return he found them sleeping. (According to Luke's Gospel, Jesus returned once, not three times as in Mark.) The last time he said, "It is enough; the hour has come; the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." (Verse 41)

#### What the Scripture Says to Us

We too need human companionship. In time of distress and loss a person is strengthened

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