

Prayers *Small Group Discussion*

WEEK ONE

I Believe, Help My Unbelief!

Mark 9:14-29

Prayer is a vital yet often confusing aspect of the Christian life. Do I pray enough? How should I pray? What should I pray about?

The prayers of the Bible have much to teach us about our freedom to relate to God through prayer, and in these prayers we learn about who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

Psalms 66:16-20

- ¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God;
let me tell you what he has done for me.
¹⁷ I cried out to him with my mouth;
his praise was on my tongue.
¹⁸ If I had cherished sin in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened;
¹⁹ but God has surely listened
and has heard my prayer.
²⁰ Praise be to God,
who has not rejected my prayer
or withheld his love from me!

Romans 8:26-27

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Mark 9:14-29

- ¹⁴ When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵ As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.
¹⁶ "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.
¹⁷ A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ¹⁸ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."
¹⁹ "You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."
²⁰ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.
²¹ Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"
"From childhood," he answered. ²² "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."
²³ "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."
²⁴ Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"
²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."
²⁶ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.
²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"
²⁹ He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

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Prayer Ideas

- Pair up and listen and pray for one another.
- Pray (with a partner, trio, large group) for your small group, your church, the greater church, missionaries, etc.
- Share requests together & pray for the person on your right this week.
- Brainstorm characteristics of God. Note them somewhere and take time to reflect & pray over each of them!
- Pray through a favorite worship song's lyrics together. Sing together.
- Pray for your neighbors and co-workers.
- Lay hands on one another to pray.
- Write a prayer on a post it note. Stick the notes all around the room. Take some time to travel and pray over all the prayers. Split the notes up to take home & pray this week.
- Take some time to think of things that start with each letter of the alphabet. Write or draw a picture and then pray prayers of thanks for each of those things listed.
- Kneel together. Take time to listen, pray silently and then pray aloud.
- Pray a Psalm. Look at Psalm 8 or one of your favorites and take time to pray through it together!
- Go for a prayer walk!
- Pray one word prayers.
- Pray for your city together.
- Other ideas?

Why was believing so hard for the father?

Potential answers: The boy had convulsions since childhood; this was "normal for him", everything he had tried in the past hadn't done anything to change it

What switched for him to proclaim, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (verse 24)?

Potential answers: he was talking face to face with Jesus! He had brought his son to see him. Deep down he knew Jesus had the power to heal.

Have you had times you prayed "help me overcome my unbelief!"?

Potential answers: Answers will vary.

How has prayer been a part of trusting Jesus & the gospel?

Potential answers: Answers will vary.

Where in this passage do we see who Jesus is and what he has done for us?

Pray Together! Really. Do it!

Leader's Note: Yes this is different, but we do want you to take time to pray together before your accountability time.

Some of these prayer ideas work best with pens, paper, crayons, post it notes, a whiteboard, etc. Look through the list on the left, get creative, ask if anyone else has ideas, add in your own, be bold and try something new - and/or (potentially) plan ahead for next time!

Accountability Questions

Where are places in your life you can pray to trust Jesus MORE?

What is keeping you from believing in the power of prayer? How can we help you in this?