

Prayers *Small Group Discussion*

WEEK TWO

The Our Father

Matthew 6:5-15

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.

Matthew 6:5-15

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

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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?

What was the context for Jesus' prayer here?

Potential answers: He is in the midst of teaching his disciples and crowds (Sermon on the Mount) on many things, covering a wide variety of topics.

Did you grow up regularly praying this prayer from Matthew 6? Why or why not? How about now?

Potential answers: Yes, every week in church, around the dinner table, nope.

What does prayer, in general, look like for you?

What feelings are connected to praying for you?

Potential answers: Quiet time alone, journaling, praying out loud, praying with a roommate or spouse, every morning/night, only when I think of it or need something, only before meals

Feelings: excitement, joy, honor, closeness to God, reluctance, dread, unsure what to say, etc.

Are there things you'd like to start, stop or change in your prayer life?

Leader's Note: consider where your people may need to be reminded of both law & grace. Jesus does command us to pray, but our salvation is not dependent on it.

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

Which part(s) of your prayer life can we celebrate with you?

Which part(s) of your prayer life can we encourage you to start, stop or change?