

Prayers *Small Group Discussion*

WEEK THREE

Jonah's Prayer

Jonah 2

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.

Jonah 2

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. ² He said: "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

³ You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

⁴ I said, 'I have been banished from your sight;
yet I will look again toward your holy temple.'

⁵ The engulfing waters threatened me,
the deep surrounded me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.

⁶ To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever.

But you, Lord my God,
brought my life up from the pit.

⁷ "When my life was ebbing away,
I remembered you, Lord,
and my prayer rose to you,
to your holy temple.

⁸ "Those who cling to worthless idols
turn away from God's love for them.

⁹ But I, with shouts of grateful praise,
will sacrifice to you.

What I have vowed I will make good.

I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'

¹⁰ And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

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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 do we know about the state of Jonah's heart at this point in the story?

Potential answers: From Chapter 1 of Jonah, we know he ran away from the Lord, jumped on a ship and asked to be thrown into the raging sea in hopes of calming the waters and saving the others on board. And the Lord sent the big fish, where he's been for 3 days and 3 nights. He may be all over the place. (fear, anger, confusion, gratitude, hope)

How was this a prayer of thanksgiving from Jonah?

Potential answers: he recognized the places he could return to the Lord and was grateful for his saved life

What do prayers of thanksgiving look like for you? Are they a 'regular' thing or an afterthought?

Potential answers: Answers will vary - I usually focus on what I need; God always hears my prayers of thanks.

Where are places in our hearts we can extend more prayers of thanksgiving - things we may too often overlook or take for granted?

Potential answers: health, job, friends, family

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

What are some specific prayers of thanksgiving in your life right now - praise God for these things!

How can we remind or encourage you to take a better posture of thanksgiving in the coming week?