

Community Part 4: Prayer

How to Use

The goal with these discussion guides during the next few weeks, is that with your group or a few others, to have honest and authentic discussions around this idea of living life together as a “new family in Christ.” The hope is that this resource is not simply a study guide to further discuss the previous weekend’s message or a certain text in Scripture, but instead an application guide of how to further flesh out and live out God’s vision for biblical community. Each week will have a brief overview to read together, 2-3 discussion questions and a suggested practice to implement with your group.

The discussion questions have been crafted in a way to help get past the surface level response we can default to and to dig into honest and perhaps challenging conversations. You might not get through them all each week and that’s okay. Allow for some space for the Spirit to work and to give time for the conversation to reach a more intimate level. We would encourage you to invite the people you’re walking through these guides with to perhaps be a little more vulnerable than they might normally be. If your group size is large, consider breaking up into a few smaller groups to better facilitate honest conversations.

Our goal for the suggested practice each week is to help establish some new rhythms and ways to live out this idea of biblical community. Our challenge to you is to try these practices through the entire 9 weeks of this series. Perhaps at the end discuss with your group about how these practices went and what they might want to continue doing.

We would also encourage you to start each discussion with a time of prayer, inviting the Spirit to work in you and your group’s heart and minds around this topic of community.

Overview (Read this aloud together)

Leader: Read Acts 4:23-31

For a lot of us, when we first think of prayer, one of our immediate thoughts is our private, individual prayers. For the early church, however, prayer was also an essential aspect of their gatherings. All throughout the New Testament, you see the importance and practice of corporate prayer. Even in a brief survey of Acts, you will see that:

The Early Church Prayed Together:

- In times of waiting (Acts 1:12-14)
- When making important decisions (Acts 1:23-26)
- Regularly, as an ongoing part of their corporate worship (Acts 2:42)
- At scheduled hours of the day (Acts 3:1-13)
- In times of crisis (Acts 12:5-17)
- When choosing and selecting missionaries (Acts 13:1-3)

- When selecting and appointing leaders (Acts 14:23)
- At certain dedicated spaces (Acts 16:13-16)
- While in prison (Acts 16:25-26)
- When departing (Acts 20:36-38; 21:4-6)

Praying with others is not about performing or impressing others with your spirituality. Rather, corporate prayer is a powerful gift God has given to His family and part of how we grow together. Praying together reminds us of its importance in one another's lives, aligns our hearts and minds in unity to Jesus, reminds us of God's character, helps us to become conduits of living out the realities of God's Kingdom, and to experience and discover the empowerment of the Spirit.

Discussion Questions

What are some fears or barriers that hinder us from praying, whether personally or in a group setting? What are some reasons we do pray? Be vulnerable.

Take a moment to reflect on your prayers from the past 30 days. How would the world be different if God granted us everything we prayed for personally, in our church, and in our life groups over the past 30 days? What would be the different, if anything, in our families, our church, our groups, our community, in the next generation, and in our world?

Leader: Take time at the end of the group to pray together. Get creative and think outside of what your group's normal rhythm looks like. Some suggestions of what that could be is taking time to pray for everyone's Three, entering into silence together to listen to God, lifting up prayers of gratitude and praises, praying through the themes of the Lord's Prayer or pray through a Psalm.

Practice for This Week

The practice for this week is simple: as a group, think of ways to integrate prayer more intentionally into your weekly gathering and implement them. Think beyond the standard opening or closing prayers you may currently do (we're not saying you need to stop those times of prayer, simply build upon those spaces.)

Some helpful resources on prayer:

[Teach Us to Pray sermon series from 2017](#)

[The Lord's Prayer episode from the BibleProject podcast](#)

Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools by Tyler Staton