

# GROWING DISCIPLES –Pray in Faith

## Week 1: Six Kinds of Prayer

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."—Matthew 21:22

### OVERVIEW OF WEEK 1

- Day 1: Prayer Is a Relationship
- Day 2: Responding and Asking Prayers
- Day 3: Four Kinds of Responding Prayers
- Day 4: Two Kinds of Asking Prayers
- Day 5: Praying with Others

### VERSE TO MEMORIZE

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" (Matthew 21:22).

### DISCIPLESHIP HELPS FOR WEEK 1

- "Six Kinds of Prayer" (p. 14)
- "Prayers of Confession" (pp. 15-16)
- "Suggestions for Praying Together" (p. 16-17)

### PREVIEW OF WEEK 1

This week you will—

- overview this six-week study;
- understand that the nature of prayer is an intimate love relationship with God;
- understand that God wants you to identify with Him by becoming like Him and by participating with Him in His work;
- understand and begin using the following six kinds of prayer in your daily prayer life.
  - —Confession: responding to God's holiness
  - —Praise: responding to God's attributes
  - —Worship: responding to God's glory
  - —Thanksgiving: responding to God's riches
  - —Petition: asking that is led by your Heavenly Father
  - —Intercession: asking that is led by your Master

# Day 1: Prayer Is a Relationship

## Scripture-Memory Verse

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" (Matthew 21:22).

↑ **As you begin each day's lesson, read the prayer promise at the top of the chapter and begin your study with prayer. Today's prayer promise is also your Scripture-memory verse for this week. Ask the Lord to teach you how to pray with this kind of faith that secures His answer.**

Prayer is not one-sided communication with a distant God. Prayer is a conversation between you and God, a relationship between you and your Creator. God desires your fellowship. More than anything else, He wants you to love Him with all your being (see Deuteronomy 6:5 below). He also wants you to know and experience His love and presence. God is seeking that kind of relationship with you!

"Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."—Deuteronomy 6:5

① **Read Revelation 3:20 and John 14:23 below. Underline the words that describe the relationship God wants to have with you.**

"Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me."—Revelation 3:20

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."—John 14:23

*This love relationship with God is the point at which effective prayer begins.*

God seeks a love relationship with you. He is knocking. Will you invite Him in? Will you enjoy fellowship with Him? Will you love Him? Will you permit Him to live with you? You may have already entered a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. For the remainder of this study, I will assume that you have done so. If you have not, find a pastor, minister, deacon, or a Christian friend to help you surrender your life to Christ as your Savior and Lord. This love relationship is the point at which effective prayer begins.

↑ **Pause and thank God for inviting you into a love relationship with Him. Ask Him to deepen your experience of His presence in prayer.**

In John 15:7 Jesus makes a special promise to those who abide in Him: "If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you." If you have a love relationship with Him and His words (teachings and commands) have become a part of your life, Jesus promises to respond to your prayers. The need for His words to remain in you is an important reason you are encouraged to memorize a Scripture passage each week. Hide God's words in your mind and heart.

**② Cut out the Scripture-memory cards in the Discipleship Helps at the end of this study and begin memorizing Matthew 21:22. Read the verse several times. Take time to meditate on its meaning for you. Repeat it aloud phrase by phrase until you can say it without looking. Review it each week during our study.**

Jesus also makes a special prayer promise to those who pray together in His name: "If two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:19-20). In this passage Jesus makes two promises for united prayer in which two or more pray together in agreement:

1. God gives greater authority to united prayer.
2. God is present where two or more gather in His name.

Our study is designed to help you experience these two promises. I want you to learn the great authority God has granted to believers when they pray together in agreement. Many people are not seeing answers to their prayers. This says more about their praying than it does about God. He has not changed. He still answers prayer. This study will help you learn to pray more effectively as you follow the biblical patterns for prayer.

*Those who gather to pray in His name experience a greater dimension of His presence. We reflect the unity within the Trinity. (John 17:21)*

Our study also designed to help you pray with other believers. God promises that those who gather to pray in His name experience a greater dimension of His presence. We reflect the unity within the Trinity when we pray together in agreement with the Lord.

**③ Have you made plans to pray with other believers as you study *Pray in Faith*?**

Yes       No

If yes, with whom will you pray? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have not made plans to pray with others, begin to do so now. See Discipleship Helps (**Suggestions for praying together**) at the end of this study.

**↑ Each day you will close your study time with a prayer time. Feel free to expand your prayer time as long as you please. Learning to pray comes with experience and practice. Today talk to the Lord about your love relationship with Him. Share with Him your desires for this study to be a time of transformation in your life. Ask Him to teach you to be a person of prayer. Ask Him to make your Life (*Prayer*) group people of prayer.**

## Day 2: Responding and Asking Prayers

### Today's Prayer Promise

"Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and wondrous things you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3).

Prayer does not begin with you. God takes the initiative; He begins the relationship. God comes to you and gives you the desire to spend time with Him in prayer: "It is God who is working in you, enabling you both to will and to act for His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

### ① Where does prayer begin?

- a. Prayer begins with me. I am the one who chooses to pray.
- b. Prayer begins with God. He causes me to want to pray.

Prayer always begins with God. Even though you may think you decide to pray, God is the One who gives you the desire. Whenever you have the desire to pray, God is extending a personal invitation for you to spend time with Him. In prayer God wants you to identify with Him in two ways:

1. God wants you to identify with Him by becoming like His perfect Son, Jesus Christ.
2. God also wants you to identify with His purposes. He wants you to cooperate in accomplishing His purposes by asking for things that will advance His kingdom (His rule). You identify with Him by working with Him in prayer.

### Two Purposes in Prayer

1. To identify with God by becoming like Him
2. To identify with God by working with Him in prayer

God gave you different kinds of prayer to accomplish these two patterns of identification with Him. During our study we will learn about six kinds of prayer, which fall into two groups. Some prayer is responding to God. In *responding prayers* you respond to God as a Person. You are learning to be a certain kind of person—a person like God Himself. *Being* is the important emphasis. As you talk to Him, God leads you to know Him and His ways so that you can become like Him.

### ② What is one group of prayers?

R\_\_\_\_\_ prayers

*Responding prayers* include confession, praise, worship, and thanksgiving. These are listed for you in the chart on page 14. The other group of prayers is asking prayers. In *asking prayers* you are concerned with God's work. *Doing* is the important emphasis. As God leads your asking, you become involved with Him in His work.

## Responding Prayers

1. Confession
2. Praise
3. Worship
4. Thanksgiving

③ Besides responding prayers, what is another group of prayers?

A \_\_\_\_\_ prayers

*Asking prayers* include prayers of petition, in which you pray for yourself and God's work in your life. Asking prayers also include intercession, in which you pray for God's work in and through others.

## Asking Prayers

1. Petition
2. Intercession

④ Drawing lines across the columns, match the group of prayers on the left with the purpose of identification with God on the right.

Responding prayers

Participating in God's work

Asking prayers

Becoming like God

*In responding prayers you identify with God by becoming like Him.*

For instance, God reveals His holiness to you by revealing His purity. Then you may see impurities in your life. You respond to God's holiness by confessing and turning away from your impurities. Through this responding prayer you become more like God.

⑤ Write below the four kinds of responding prayers. If you need help, review the chart in the Discipleship Helps on page 14.

C \_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's holiness.

P \_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's attributes.

W \_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's glory.

T \_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's riches.

*In asking prayers you identify with God by participating with Him in His work.*

In asking prayers you identify with God by participating with Him in His work. For instance, God as your Master may lead you to ask Him for adults to work with youth in your church. God answers your prayer by giving a young couple a desire to work with youth. When they respond, you know God accomplished His purposes in answer to prayer. Through this asking prayer you worked together with God.

⑥ Using the chart on page 14, write the two kinds of asking prayers.

P\_\_\_\_\_ is asking that is led by your Heavenly Father.

I\_\_\_\_\_ is asking that is led by your Master.

↕ Pray, asking God to help you become more like Him. Agree to allow God to involve you in His work through prayer.

## Day 3: Four Kinds of Responding Prayers

### Today's Prayer Promise

"Sacrifice a thank offering to God, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call on Me in a day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will honor Me" (Psalm 50:14-15).

God wants you, as His child, to identify with Him by becoming like Him. God reveals Himself and His ways to you so that you can become like Him. In a love relationship with you, God reveals what He is like. As you respond to Him in that relationship, you can become more like Him.

① Which of the following is the purpose of responding prayers?

- a. I identify with God by working with Him in His kingdom.
- b. I identify with God by becoming like Him.

### Confession: Responding to God's Holiness

By responding to God in prayer, you become more like Him (b). One trait God reveals about Himself is His *holiness*. He is separate, pure, and righteous. God reveals that He is holy and that He wants you to be holy like Him. He wants you to be pure and set apart for His purposes. But sometimes you are not holy. You sin. When you sin, you do not lose your holiness, but you interrupt the process of growing in holiness, or sanctification. Confession restores the process of gradual sanctification. Because sin is offensive to God, it hinders your intimate fellowship with Him. The Holy Spirit convicts you of the sin, and you can use a prayer of confession to restore the fellowship. **Confession** is saying the same thing God says, or agreeing with God. You agree with God about the nature of your sin. Because you love Him, you want to return to Him (repent) and become more like Him. Confession is responding to God's holiness.

② Fill in the blanks below with the first kind of responding prayer and the aspect of God to which you are responding. Then read the following example.

C \_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's h \_\_\_\_\_.

### Confession

"Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion. Wash away my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin. For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me. Against You—You alone—I have sinned and done this evil in Your sight. So You are right when You pass sentence; You are blameless when You judge. God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit" (Psalm 51:1-4, 10, 12).

### Praise: Responding to God's Attributes

God reveals His attributes or character traits because He wants you to become like Him. As you grow in your knowledge of God, especially through Bible study, you will know His attributes. When you know what God is like, you want to praise Him. Praise lifts up or focuses on God's attributes. Praise exalts God in His divinity—because of what He is like. Praise is responding to God's attributes.

③ What is a second kind of responding prayer, and to which aspects of God are you responding? Fill in the blanks and read an example below.

P \_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's a \_\_\_\_\_.

### Praise

"Yahweh is great and is highly praised; His greatness is unsearchable. One generation will declare Your works to the next and will proclaim Your mighty acts. I will speak of Your glorious splendor and Your wonderful works. They will proclaim the power of Your awe-inspiring works, and I will declare Your greatness. They will give a testimony of Your great goodness and will joyfully sing of Your righteousness" (Psalm 145:3-7).

### Worship: Responding to God's Glory

When God acts to reveal Himself, He displays His glory. Glory is the evidence of God's attributes (what He is like). God reveals His glory through His mighty acts. All creation reveals God's glory. When you see God's glory, you love Him. Worship is responding to God's glory. Worship is adoring, loving, and honoring God. Worship is much more personal and intimate than praise. Worship is the expression of your love, adoration, reverence, and honor for God.

**④ In addition to confession and praise, what is a third kind of responding prayer, and to which aspect of God are you responding? Fill in the blanks and read the example below**

W \_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's g \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Worship**

"As a deer longs for streams of water, so I long for You, God. I thirst for God, the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2).

### **Thanksgiving: Responding to God's riches**

God reveals His riches—both physical and spiritual. God is the Giver of every perfect gift. He wants you to experience the abundant life He has to give you. Thanksgiving is responding to and participating in God's riches. Ephesians 5:20 tells you to thank God in everything. Thanksgiving is not just an event or a statement. It is an attitude. God wants you to have an attitude of gratitude.

**⑤ In addition to confession, praise, and worship, what is a fourth kind of responding prayer, and to which aspects of God are you responding? Fill in the blanks and read the example below.**

T \_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's r \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Thanksgiving**

"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good. His love is eternal. He spread the land on the waters. His love is eternal. He remembered us in our humiliation His love is eternal. and rescued us from our foes. His love is eternal. Give thanks to the God of heaven! His love is eternal" (Psalm 136:1, 6, 23-24, 26).

↕ **Review the four kinds of responding prayers. Then spend a few minutes praying and responding to evidences of God's holiness, attributes, glory, and riches with prayers of confession, praise, worship, and thanksgiving.**

## **Day 4: Two Kinds of Asking Prayers**

### **Today's Prayer Promise**

"This is the confidence we have before Him: whenever we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked Him for" (1 John 5:14-15).



① To review yesterday's lesson, list the four kinds of responding prayers. Check your answers on page 14.

\_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's holiness.

\_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's attributes.

\_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's glory.

\_\_\_\_\_ is responding to God's riches.

In responding prayers you respond to the Person of God or to the aspects of who He is (holiness, attributes, glory, riches). The other group of prayers is asking prayers, emphasized in Jesus' greatest teaching sessions:

"Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

"If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14).

"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you" (John 15:7).

"Until now you have asked for nothing in My name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete" (John 16:24).

The Bible teaches two kinds of asking prayers: petition and intercession. Asking prayers are not direct responses to the *Person* of God. As God takes the lead in the asking prayers, you follow His lead and participate with Him in His *work*. The great purpose in asking prayers is for you to identify with His purposes. God is interested in your asking prayers. God wants you to cooperate in accomplishing His purposes by asking for things that will advance His kingdom (His rule).

② Which of the following is the purpose of asking prayers?

- a. I identify with God by working with Him in His kingdom.
- b. I identify with God by becoming like Him.

Through asking prayers God brings about His purposes in your life and in the lives of others for whom you pray by involving you in His work (a). Let's overview the two kinds of asking prayers.

**Petition: Asking Led by Your Heavenly Father**

**Intercession: Asking Led by Your Master**

## **Petition: Asking Led by Your Heavenly Father**

Petition is asking for yourself, your family, your church, or your group. God reveals Himself as a Father. When you are redeemed, you are adopted into His family. As His child, you address your requests to your Heavenly Father.

God's purpose in encouraging your petition is to mold you into a certain kind of person—someone who reflects the life and character of His Son Jesus. Because your personal petition should be directed by your Heavenly Father, through this kind of prayer you become more like the person God wants you to be as He accomplishes His purposes in your life.

③ **What is one kind of asking prayer? P** \_\_\_\_\_

Who leads your petitions? My \_\_\_\_\_

④ **Read below for examples of individual and group petition. Underline the requests made of God.**

### **Individual Petition**

(David's prayer for himself) "LORD, I turn my hope to You. My God, I trust in You. *Do not let me be disgraced*; do not let my enemies gloat over me. Make Your ways known to me, LORD; teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; I wait for You all day long" (Psalm 25:1-2, 4-5).

### **Group Petition**

(The early church's prayer for itself) "Master, You are the One who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them. And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that Your slaves may speak Your message with complete boldness, while You stretch out Your hand for healing, signs, and wonders to be performed through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus" (Acts 4:24, 29-30).

### **Intercession**

(Paul's prayer for the Ephesians) "I pray that He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to *be strengthened with power* through His Spirit in the inner man, and that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and width, height and depth, and to know the Messiah's love that surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:16-19).

## Intercession: Asking Led by Your Master

God reveals Himself as Master and Ruler. God is at work in His world, and He has chosen to do His work through people. When God gets ready to do something, He calls a person to intercession, which is asking for someone else. Your Master leads your intercession for others. Through intercession you work with God as His servant. Intercession is an important method God uses to accomplish His will among people.

⑤ What is the second kind of asking prayer? I \_\_\_\_\_

Who leads your intercession? My \_\_\_\_\_

⑥ Re-read the example of intercession. Underline the requests made of God on behalf of others.

↕ Pause to pray, using Paul's requests in Ephesians 3:16-19 above. First pray these requests for yourself. Then pray these requests for your church or prayer group.

## Day 5: Praying with Others

### Today's Prayer Promise

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15, KJV).

I hope you have been paying attention to the prayer promise at the beginning of each day. You may want to write the most meaningful promises on index cards and memorize them.

① Read today's prayer promise and complete the following activities.

- a. Circle some of the ways God is described in this verse.
- b. What are two places in which God chooses to dwell? Number them.
- c. What are two reasons God chooses to dwell with those who are humble and contrite?

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**② Which set of the following characteristics best describes you?**

- a. Humble and contrite
- b. Proud, arrogant, remorseless

*We should seek to develop the character of one with whom God dwells. He brings the humble and contrite into His presence.*

If you are interested in experiencing God's presence, seek to develop the character of one with whom God dwells. He brings the humble and contrite into His presence. He does not dwell with the proud and arrogant.

Day 5 of each week in this study focuses on praying together. Often we are so familiar with praying alone that we pray with others the same way we do by ourselves. Does the following describe any prayer meetings you have attended?

1. Intercessor 1 prays through his mental list while other group members check off these subjects on their mental lists.
2. Intercessor 2 prays through the remaining items on her mental list while other group members check off items on their mental lists.
3. Intercessor 3 has little left on his list about which to pray.
4. Intercessor 4, feeling that almost everything has been covered, closes the prayer time.

Not every group prayer time is like that. However, we miss some exciting dimensions of praying together if we only pray through long mental lists. Let me suggest that you and your Life (prayer) group consider some guidelines for praying together more effectively.

**③ Read "Suggestions for Praying Together" on page 16-17. In each suggestion underline a word or a phrase to help you remember it.**

**④ Now review the words or phrases. Circle the numbers beside the three suggestions you believe will be most helpful for your prayer group to practice.**

At least once each week we will discuss ways your prayer group can pray together more effectively. Today we will examine two suggestions.

#### **Acknowledge God's presence and participation**

God promised His presence where two or more are gathered in His name (see Matthew 18:20 below). He is also actively involved when you pray together. Both the Holy Spirit and Jesus intercede for and with you (see Romans 8:26-27, 34; Hebrews 7:25 below). When you meet with a group to pray, remember that God is present. Think of your prayer time as a conversation among your group members and God. Speak to Him. Listen to what God may say to you as He

guides your group to Scriptures and as He guides your prayers. You may speak to one another as well as share prayer concerns during your prayer.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them."—Matthew 18:20

"The Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings. And He who searches the hearts knows the Spirit's mindset, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the One who died, but even more, has been raised; He also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us."—Romans 8:26-27, 34

"He [Christ] is always able to save those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them."—Hebrews 7:25

**⑤ When your group gathers to pray, who should be the focus of attention?**

- a. I should be the focus of attention. I am important.
- b. Our group leader should be the focus. We need her guidance.
- c. God must be the focus. He is the most important One present.

Because prayer is a conversation among your group members and God, He should be the focus of your time together (c).

### **Prepare yourselves through confession**

If you were entering the court of a king or a queen, you would want to be prepared. You would want to dress and act correctly. In a similar way, your group will want to prepare for entering the throne room of heaven. Jesus has made a way for your cleansing as you confess and turn from your sin (see 1 John 1:9 below). In your prayer-group meeting take time for individuals to prepare themselves in silent prayer. You may also want to take time to "confess your sins to one another and pray for one another" (James 5:16).

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 John 1:9

**↕ Read the Discipleship Help on confession (p. 15) Spend time in prayers of confession. Ask God to cleanse you thoroughly. Pray for your prayer-group members as they also prepare for your time together in prayer this week.**

# Discipleship Helps

## Six Kinds of Prayer

**Confession** means agreeing with God. Confession includes agreeing with God about the nature of your sin, after which you seek God's cleansing and restoration to intimate fellowship. Confession is a good beginning place for prayer, preparing you to enter the presence of Holy God.

**Praise** is lifting up the attributes of God. You have a tendency to become like what you value or praise. By lifting up God's attributes in praise, you respond to Him by becoming more like Him. Through praise you elevate Him in the eyes and ears of others.

**Worship:** When God reveals His Person and His glory, you love Him and long to be with Him. You respond to God's glory through prayers of worship. You worship by expressing your awe, reverence, honor, love, and adoration for God.

**Thanksgiving** is responding to God's riches bestowed through His blessings. Thanksgiving is not just an act or a statement. It is an attitude of gratitude. Prayers of thanksgiving reveal a relationship between the Giver and the receiver.

**Petition:** God is your Heavenly Father. He wants you to show the world what a child of God looks like. Therefore, He will guide your petitions to help you become more like Him.

**Intercession:** God is Master, and you are His Servant. God has chosen you to labor with Him through prayers of intercession. Intercessory prayers are for God's kingdom purposes to be completed in the lives of others. Your Master will lead you to pray for His purposes.

PRAYER	NATURE OF THE PRAYER	GOD
Confession	Responding to ...	God's holiness
Praise	Responding to ...	God's attributes
Worship	Responding to ...	God's glory
Thanksgiving	Responding to ...	God's riches
Petition	Asking that is led by ...	Your Heavenly Father
Intercession	Asking that is led by ...	Your Master

## Prayers of Confession

When you enter God's presence, you become aware of His holiness. In the presence of God's holiness you become aware of your sinfulness. Sin hinders your prayer relationship with God. *Confession* means *agreeing with God*. Confession includes agreeing with God about the nature of your sin, after which you seek God's cleansing and restoration to intimate fellowship. Confession is a good beginning place for prayer, preparing you to enter the presence of our Heavenly Father and Holy God.

Confession is also agreeing with God about the truth. You can confess who God is. You can agree with Him about who you are in relationship to Him. You can agree with Him about the truth of your circumstances or your need.

### Examples of Confession of Sin

"[David] said to the LORD, 'I have sinned greatly in what I've done. Now, LORD, because I've been very foolish, please take away your servant's guilt'" (2 Samuel 24:10).

"Our iniquities are higher than our heads and our guilt is as high as the heavens. Our guilt has been terrible from the days of our fathers until the present. Now, our God, what can we say in light of this? For we have abandoned the commandments you gave through Your servants the prophets. LORD God of Israel, You are righteous. ... Here we are before You with our guilt, though no one can stand in Your presence because of this" (Ezra 9:6-7, 10-11, 15).

"Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion. Wash away my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin. For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me. Against You—You alone—I have sinned and done this evil in Your sight. So You are right when You pass sentence; You are blameless when You judge. Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed rejoice. Turn Your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt. God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not banish me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore the joy of Your salvation to me and give me a willing spirit. Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to You" (Psalm 51:1-4, 7-13).

"Though our guilt testifies against us, LORD, act for Your name's sake. Indeed, our rebellions are many; we have sinned against You" (Jeremiah 14:7).

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

## Group Confession

"Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and they stood and confessed their sins and the guilt of their fathers. While they stood in their places, they read from the book of the law of the LORD their God for a fourth of the day and spent another fourth of the day in confession and worship of the LORD their God" (Nehemiah 9:2-3).

## Promise for Confession

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

## Examples of Confession of Truth

"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!'" (Matthew 16:16).

"Master, You are the One who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them" (Acts 4:24).

## Sample Prayers of the Confession of Truth

- Sin no longer has dominion over me.
- You have dressed me in robes of Your righteousness.
- You are Lord and Master; I am Your servant.
- You are my Father; I am Your child.
- You are Sovereign; my answer is yes.
- You are Truth; You are my Way and Life.
- I walk in victory with Christ.
- Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world.

## Suggestions for Praying Together

1. Acknowledge God's presence and active participation with you in prayer.
2. Use common language rather than church words.
3. Speak for yourself, using *I, me, my, or mine* rather than *we, us, our, or ours*.
4. Prepare yourselves through prayers of confession, cleansing, and reconciliation.
5. Spend time in prayers of worship, praise, and thanksgiving.
6. Spend the bulk of your time in prayers of petition and intercession. Share requests as you pray rather than spend time at the beginning to list and discuss requests.
7. When time permits, pray until God is finished with you.
8. Pray about one subject at a time.
9. Take turns praying about a subject. Continue on that subject as long as God seems to guide the praying.
10. Be specific in what you ask of God.
11. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your praying according to God's will. Pay attention to the Holy Spirit's direction for praying.



12. Consider God's viewpoint and give God a reason to answer.
13. Use biblical principles, patterns, and promises to guide your requests.
14. Seek Spirit-guided agreement with others in your prayers.
15. Seek to put yourself in the place of those for whom you are praying so that you can "feel" what they feel.
16. Listen to the prayers of others for direction or answers to your prayers.
17. Respond to the prayers of others.
18. Pray for one another.
19. Consider writing down the subjects for which you have prayed so that you can watch with anticipation for God's answers.
20. When God answers a prayer, remember to thank Him and watch for opportunities to testify to His wonderful work.

### **Evaluating Group Prayer Sessions**

1. At particular times did you sense God's presence in a special way? When and how?
2. Did you spend most of your time in prayer rather than discuss prayer or share prayer requests?
3. Did you take time for confession, praise, worship, and thanksgiving? Was it meaningful or just ritual?
4. Did you pray about one subject at a time, or did individuals tend to pray through a list of several unrelated requests at one time?
5. Were your requests to God specific, or were they general and vague? Will you recognize when God answers your requests?
6. Did you use Bible promises, patterns, examples, or principles in your praying? Were they meaningful or helpful? Have any come to mind after your prayer session that would have been meaningful? If so, share them with the group.
7. Did you give God reasons to answer?
8. Did you come to a sense of Spirit-led agreement about the direction of your requests? Did your faith increase?
9. Did you listen to and respond to others' prayers?
10. Did you pray for one another?

# Life Group Meeting Discussion Guide

## Session 1: Six Kinds of Prayer

### Opening Prayer

Read [Luke 11:1-13](#). As you acknowledge the Lord's presence with you. Ask the Lord to teach you and your Life Group to pray during the coming weeks. Ask Him to encourage your persistence in prayer and ask Him to fill each of you with His Holy Spirit.

### Reviewing Week 1 and Sharing Responses

1. What is the difference between prayer as a religious activity and prayer as a relationship with God? *Discuss.* ([Day 1](#))

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2. What are two groups of prayers we will study, and what is the purpose of each? Which group is more focused on being, and which one is focused on doing? ([Day 2](#))

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3. What are four types of responding prayers, and to what aspect of God's nature do you respond in each type? ([Day 3](#))

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4. What are two types of asking prayers, and who leads your praying in each? ([Day 4](#))

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### This Week's Prayer Focus: Confession

(See pages 15-16 for examples and topics.)

1. Do you practice or have you ever established a quiet time in which you pray privately to allow the Lord to prepare or guide you for His will being done in your life.
2. why do you use these and other subjects in your prayer confession:
  - Confess truths about God and about your relationship with Him.
  - Confess your needs, the needs of others, and the needs of your church.
  - Confess the truths of your new nature in Christ.

### Interacting with the Scriptures

1. Quote and write [Matthew 21:22](#) as memory Scripture verse for this week.

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2. What verse or passage of Scripture has been most meaningful or challenging to you this week and why?

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**Praying Together**

Turn to Day 5, activity 4. Be ready to share what suggestions for praying together do you believe will be most helpful for our group to practice and why?

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Write these suggestions out in prayer. Begin with responding prayers. If called upon, pray the requests mentioned.

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**Closing Prayer**

Pray for the group and ask the Lord to teach each person to pray more effectively.

