

# “How to Pray” Discussion Guide

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1. Open the session with prayer. Ask if there is someone who would like to volunteer to pray with the group. If not, be prepared to pray.
  
2. Read Matthew 6.7-15
  - a. Discuss the sermon on The Lord’s Prayer from last Sunday. What did you hear in the sermon; what were its main “take aways”? What “aha” moments did you have? What did you hear that was new? Any ideas from the sermon you are still wrestling with?
  
3. Each of us has had unique experiences with prayer, and when we talk about those experiences honestly – revealing the negative as well as the positive – we often encourage one another to renew our efforts to keep company with God. Which word(s) would you use to describe the nature of your prayer life? (Structured? Spontaneous? Erratic? Rushed? Meditative? Absent?)
  
4. Which words best describe you level of satisfaction and fulfillment in your prayer life? (Confusing? Fulfilling? Frustrating?)
  
5. When Jesus lived on earth, prayer was as essential to him as food. His disciples recognized the uniqueness of his prayer life and sought to pray as he did. They prayed intently and also taught other believers to pray. Acts 10.1-2; Colossians 4.2; I Thessalonians 3.10; 5.17; and I Timothy 5.5 provide glimpses of prayer in the lives of early Christians. Read each passage and consider the following questions:
  - How serious were they about prayer, and what role did it play in their lives?
  - What were some of their regular practices and purposes in prayer?
  - In what way were their prayers “connected” with their daily life and God’s work on earth?
  
6. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, prayer just doesn’t seem to be working. We may even reach a point of discouragement or exhaustion where we cannot voice even a word to God in prayer. Yet it is important that we still “show up” in whatever state we find ourselves.
  - Regardless of apparent success or failure in relating to God through prayer, how can we be certain that even our wordlessness finds its way to the Source, that our interests will be communicated to God? (See Romans 8.26-27.

- What encouragement does this commitment on God's part provide? How should it affect our prayers through difficult times?
7. What are some of the things that make prayer work for you? What type of setting do you find best for regular communication with God? What time of day works best for you and why? How beneficial to your communion with God is it to have inner conversations with God all day long?