



PRAYER

DISCIPLESHIP FOUNDATIONS

GOAL

We will love God by devoting ourselves, corporately and individually, to daily communicating with God in light of who He is and what He has done according to His Word.

IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND, DEVELOP



Who must we **be** in order to spiritually mature?

What must we **know**?

What must we **do** to apply and establish spiritual maturity as a lifelong pattern?

- **IDENTIFY** as God's children who need to pray, privately and alongside others.
- **UNDERSTAND** that as we pray, we are not changing God's mind about circumstances, but allowing Him to align our thoughts with His.
- **DEVELOP** a regular private prayer habit that incorporates praising God for who He is, repenting of sin, giving thanks for His blessings, and humbly asking for His provision.

DEFINITION OF PRAYER: IT IS TALKING TO GOD, REMEMBERING HE IS GOD.

DEEPEN OUR UNDERSTANDING - God has revealed Himself through His Word. Bible study accurately informs our understanding of the one, true, living God. We communicate with God in light of who He is.

PRAYER CHANGES US, OUR DESIRES, AND OUR WILLS:

- "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).
- The more we know about God through Bible study, the more we are moved to respond.
- The more we know about God, the more we see our need for Him.
- The more we know about God, the more we desire the things He desires, love the things He loves, will the things He wills, which is reflected in our prayer life.

When you pray, where is your focus?

- We cannot use prayer to satisfy our own selfish desires (Matthew 6:10).
- We cannot coax God into giving us what we want by saying the right words, in the right way, the right number of times (empty words, Matthew 6:5).
- God is not a vending machine or a magic genie (Matthew 7:7-11).

Prayer is honest and transparent communication.

- Talk about the motivations behind your prayer. Focus on the REAL issue with yourself.
- It is not wrong to pray for things that we need or want. Paul tells us to in Philippians 4. Just be sure not to make good things the ultimate things. To do so is to cross over into idolatry.

WHY WE PRAY:

- We pray because the Bible tells us to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
- We pray as an act of worship.
- We pray because God wants to have a relationship with us.
- We pray to shift our focus from us to God. Prayer leads us to acknowledge our dependence on God.
- We pray to confess our sin.
- We pray to participate in God's kingdom work.
 - » Abraham & Lot (Genesis 18:16-33).
 - » Moses asking for help with Pharaoh (Exodus 3-4).
 - » Hannah's prayer for a child (1 Samuel 1:8-17).
 - » Hezekiah begging for an extension of his life (2 Kings 20:1-7).
 - » Jonah's prayer for mercy (Jonah 2).
 - » Jesus prays for Peter's faith (Luke 22:31-32).
 - » Effective prayer (James 5:13-18).

WHEN AND WHERE SHOULD WE PRAY:

Jesus models prayer for us ... as well as many other people in Scripture.

- "But Jesus often withdrew to desolate places to pray" (Luke 5:16). The Greek translated "was regularly withdrawing and praying."
- "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42).
- "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

HOW AND WHAT TO PRAY:

- **Pray continuously**—our first thought and last request (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- **In the Spirit**—an act of submission, acknowledging who God is (Ephesians 6:18).
- **Persistently**—God answers prayers in His way and in His time. We must remain thankful no matter what His answer because His motive is always love, and He knows all things (Ephesians 6:18).
- **For one another**—that we would be strong and stand, that we would fight from a position and perspective of victory, and that we would grow as disciples (Ephesians 6:18-19).
- **For boldness**—following the example of Paul when he was in chains (Ephesians 6:19-20).
- **How?** With a rightly postured heart. Order the things and people of your life rightly. God first. Everything else is behind God.
- **What?** Bible study should be brought into your prayer time. We should listen to the Word, study, think, reflect, and ponder the Scriptures and then pray that back to God in confession, thanksgiving, praise or petition.

A.C.T.S • PRAYER MODEL

A—Adoration which reminds me I am not God.

C—Confession which reminds me I am a sinner saved by grace.

T—Thanksgiving which reminds me how much God has blessed me.

S—Supplication is where I bring my requests to God.

*Adoration, confession,
and thanksgiving
posture my attitude and
heart correctly such that
when I move towards
supplication, it is
done with right motives*

THE LORD'S PRAYER: *Reword this into your own words following the pattern of Jesus (Matthew 6:9-15).*

ADDITIONAL HELPS

1. Give back to God in prayer through adoration and thanksgiving.
2. Get back from God in prayer through confession and supplication.
3. Be persistent until you are consistent.
4. Keep a prayer journal of requests and answers.
5. Use a timer.
6. Pray out loud.

APPLICATION:


Prayer Plan:

- Make a plan and submit it to your Small Group Leader or Accountability Partner. Include days, time, location and duration you will pray. Make a daily appointment with God. (Make a plan B in case plan A doesn't work.)
- Prayer Calendar: see below
- Pray.
- Commit to be in a life group that prays for and with one another.

PRAYER CALENDAR:

Write out the days of the week you plan to pray. Then write out what topics you're going to pray for that day. The calendar is for your requests. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving should be part of your prayer as well. Choose one day to pray for someone/thing outside of your immediate context, such as the gospel spread to an unreached place, or a missionary.

Write out a daily Prayer Calendar with prayer topic categories to:

- Avoid dumping all your prayer requests at one time. Spread them out over the course of the week.
 - Create order and vision in your prayers. Put thought into what you want to pray about and think BIG. Kingdom focused prayers.
 - Pray more deeply, more thoroughly over each category than if you were praying for the same thing every day. (Pray for your family/immediate needs daily!)
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- » Sunday: Worship Service, the Lost
 - » Monday: Immediate family
 - » Tuesday: Friends / extended family
 - » Wednesday: Pastors
 - » Thursday: Specific missionaries
 - » Friday: Job or School
 - » Saturday: World Leaders