

WEEK 1 - How to P.R.A.Y.

Read:

Introduction How to Make the Most of this Book
Chapter 1 Prayer Everywhere
Chapter 2 Keeping it Simple

Key verse

“Lord, teach us to pray” – Luke 11:1

Summary points

- We can ask Jesus to help teach us to pray
- Prayer is like a toolbox – there are lots of different ways of praying
- Keep it simple. Keep it Real. Keep it up.

Questions

Q. What do you find difficult about prayer? What do you find easy? Why do you think prayer can often feel hard?

Pete says the best piece of advice is to **“Keep it simple, keep it real and keep it up.”**

Keep it simple: “your prayer life is at its best at its simplest”

Q. What do you mostly talk to God about?

Keep it real: “Don’t role-play before God”

Q. Do you feel like you have to act a certain way before God when you pray? Why or why not?

Keep it up: “Don’t give up praying too soon”

Q. Do you find it challenging to persevere in prayer? How can we be encouraged to keep going?

Do It

Think about one way you’d like to grow in prayer and your relationship with God over the course. Write down your goals, so that you can revisit them at the end of the book.

WEEK 2- Pause & Rejoice

Read:

Chapter 3 Slowing and Centering
Chapter 4 Adoration

Key verse

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name” – Matthew 6:9

Summary points

- Start by recognising God is God.
- Worship puts things back into perspective.
- Use P.R.A.Y – Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield.

Questions

Q. Why do you think that we most often associate prayer with asking, rather than worship and adoration?

“In commanding us to glorify him, God is inviting us to enjoy him” – C.S.Lewis

Q. Do you enjoy spending time with God? When are the times that prayer feels most enjoyable?

Q. Pete says that prayer is primarily about relationship with God: “It’s relational, not transactional”. How does this change your perspective of coming to God in prayer?

Q. In Acts 4:24-31, the early church put their own crisis into perspective by worshipping. What are the practical things you could do this week to foster an attitude of worship in your daily routine?

Do It

Practise thanksgiving and praise by reflecting on Psalm 8. You might like to read it out loud. Then, take time to **Pause** and **Rejoice**:

- **Pause:** Take a moment in silence and invite the Holy Spirit to help you reflect on what you’ve just read.
- **Rejoice:** Speak out prayers of adoration. Reflect and to thank God for one or two things in your life. You might like to use the Psalm as inspiration, too.

WEEK 3 Asking (pt.1)

Read:

Chapter 5 Petition
Chapter 6 Intercession

Key verse

“Give us this day our daily bread” – Matthew 6:11

Summary points

- The Father loves to give good gifts.
- Traffic lights: Yes, Wait, No.
- Sometimes we need to “stack dominoes” and persevere in prayer

Questions

Q. It’s often easier to believe God can change things in our hearts rather than believing in things can see in the world. Do you agree?

Q. How often do you ask God for what you want as well as what you need?

Pete uses the traffic light analogy to describe different ways God responds to our prayers:

- Green: Yes
- Amber: Wait / Persevere
- Red: No

Q. Are you experiencing a “green”, “amber” or “red” response to any specific prayers at the moment?

Do It

Take time to pray. Remember the following as you pray:

- **Pray incrementally:** Pray for a specific next step, rather than jumping to the top of the staircase
- **Pray the promises of God:** Is there a specific promise that relates to the situation?

You also might like to follow the **P.R.A.Y** model – start by **pausing** and welcome the Holy Spirit, then **rejoice** and give thanks before **asking**. Remember to **yield** and surrender everything back to God as you finish.

WEEK 4 Asking (pt.2) & Yielding (pt.1)

Read:

Chapter 7 Unanswered Prayer
Chapter 8 Contemplation

Key verse

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven – Matthew 6:10

Summary points

- The Bible is honest about unanswered prayer – we are part of a faith that is all about wrestling.
- God's world, God's war, God's will.
- God's silence is not the same as his absence.
- Contemplative prayer is silent enjoyment of God's loving presence.
- The contemplation journey has 3 stages:
 - Meditation: "Me and God"
 - Contemplation: "God and me"
 - Communion: "only God"

Questions

Q. Have you ever felt God's silence/absence in seasons of your life and faith? How did you respond? How has the reality of unanswered prayer affected your relationship with God?

Q. How do you think we can get better, as communities, at dealing with the realities and challenges of unanswered prayer?

Q. How can we encourage one another in "faithfulness" as well as "faith"?

Q: What is your initial reaction to the practice of contemplation? Does it excite you, scare you or bore you?

Q. How does this quote from Mother Teresa challenge our culture's attitude to social justice or practical action?
"It's not how much we do but how much love we put into the actions that we do."

Q. It can be difficult to make time to pause and contemplate God. What rhythms could you put in place to grow this type of prayer in your life?

Do It

Pete says that, "Even when we don't understand, we can still trust". Take time to stop, pause and recommit to trusting God in your life. You might like to play some worship music and spend time sitting and reflecting.

WEEK 5 Yielding (pt.2)

Read:

Chapter 9 Listening
Chapter 10 Confession & Reconciliation

Key Verse

“Give us today our daily bread” – Matthew 6:11

Summary points

- We are designed to walk and talk with God
- Slow down, Soften up
- When listening to God, remember ABC: Advice, Bible, Common Sense

Questions

Q. Do you feel like your connection to God’s voice is like “wi-fi”, “cell phone” or “snail mail”? Do you find it’s obvious when God is speaking to you?

Q. Do you experience hearing God’s voice in a specific way? If so, how?

Q. What practical actions could you take this week to make time for listening to God?

Q. How can we encourage one another to “keep our hearts soft” in the busyness of our daily lives?

Do It

Practise the Lectio Divina. You might like to explore the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:13-16.

Remember to:

- Read it – Familiarisation
- Explore it – Imagination
- Pray it – Conversation
- Enjoy it – Celebration

WEEK 6 Yielding (pt.3)

Read:

Chapter 11 Spiritual Warfare
Chapter 12 Amen

Key Verse

“Deliver us from the evil one” – Matthew 6:13

Summary Points

- The Bible is clear that we’re in a spiritual battle.
- Jesus was speaking into a culture of different world-views.
- Remember the armour of God.
- Pray it. Practice it. Preach it.

Questions

Q. How do you find that you approach spiritual warfare: do you relate to any of the world-views of the Sadducees, Essenes or Pharisees that Pete mentioned?

Q. How do we get the balance right between the reality of spiritual warfare and focusing on Jesus?

“When we pray for God’s Kingdom come it’s because it’s not automatic... we have to pray it in.”

Q. How does this reality affect the way that we do spiritual warfare?

Q. What are the strongholds – greed, arrogance etc – in your home, work or community context? How can you live in the **“equal but opposite spirit”** this week?

Do It

Revisit the goals that you set at the beginning of reading *How to Pray* to grow in prayer and your relationship with God. Which one thing that you’ve learnt will you take away from this book study?