



MONTHLY PRACTICE: PRAYER

OVERVIEW

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

Ephesians 6:18

*Prayer produces an intimacy with God
that changes us and our circumstances.*

Prayer allows us to learn God's heart for us and to share our hearts with Him. Prayer is powerful and often changes our circumstances, our perspective, or both. We pray daily to connect with God relationally, express our emotions to Him honestly, allow Him to guide our thinking, and ask Him to move in our lives and our world.

Overview Video

<https://youtu.be/vPcZOlvtp9Y>

WEEKLY GUIDES

WEEK 1

PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

- Make sure you have access to the overview video and are able to play that for the group.
- Review the Discussion Topic.
 - *These are intended to give you context for the week. You can choose to start with these and use them for discussion, or just bring them up as applicable during your Group practice time.*
- Read through the Group and Individual Practices.

*Discussion Topic: **God-Oriented Prayer***

- The greatest reward of prayer is not what happens after we pray, but who we encounter when we pray.
- Incorporating moments of intentional slowness, quiet reflection and attentive listening helps us notice and enjoy God's presence.
- God-oriented prayer could include worship, silence and surrender.

Connection Time - 20 Minutes

Sermon Review - 20 Minutes

(Guides are updated weekly on the [Community webpage](#).)

Group Application - 40 Minutes

- **Group practice - do this together in Group**
 - Watch the overview video together, then engage in discussion.
 - **REVIEW** the Discussion Topic for this week.
 - **ASK:** Why is it sometimes harder to focus on our relationship with God than on our circumstances in prayer?
 - **ASK:** Why is it often uncomfortable to be still and quiet?
 - **REVIEW** the memory verse and other resources for the month.

- **Individual practice - to do on your own throughout the week**
 - Spend at least five minutes each day sitting still, doing nothing, in a quiet place. Begin by asking God to speak to you. As different things come into your mind, write them down and verbally invite the Holy Spirit to be involved in whatever you think about. Then do your best to let that thought or emotion rest, being satisfied with God's presence and trusting in his power.

Pray - 10 Minutes

WEEK 2

PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

- Review the Discussion Topic..
- Read through the Group and Individual Practices.

*Discussion Topic: **Self-Oriented Prayer***

- Being honest and vulnerable with our thoughts and emotions in prayer is critical to connecting with Jesus in a real and meaningful way.
- Prayer allows us to take our needs and desires to God in humble dependence.
- Self-oriented prayer can include contemplation, confession and petition.

Connection Time - 20 Minutes

Sermon Review - 20 Minutes

(Guides are updated weekly on the [Community webpage](#).)

Group Application - 40 Minutes

- **Group practice - do this together in Group**
 - **REVIEW** the previous week's individual practice.
 - **REVIEW** the Discussion Highlights for this week.

- Spread out and take 15 minutes to be still and quiet. Ask God the questions, “How is my heart? How am I really doing?” Allow him to answer and write down anything you hear. Be honest. There may be something you need to confess, something you need to surrender, something you were encouraged by or something you are worried about. Don’t worry about the result, just embrace the process of listening.
- **ASK:** Why is it hard sometimes to ask God for what we want/need or to be honest about the state of our heart?
- **ASK:** What do you believe God really thinks about you?
- **REVIEW** the memory verse and other resources for the month.
- **Individual practice - to do on your own throughout the week**
 - Practice confession this week. Find something, big or small, that you need to confess (we can all do this; something that is obviously a sin or that you sense God telling you should be different in your life) and tell a close friend.

Pray - 10 Minutes

WEEK 3

PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

- Review the Discussion Topic..
- Read through the Group and Individual Practices.

*Discussion Topic: **Others-Oriented Prayer***

- Prayer that goes beyond our personal needs connects us to God’s mission and activity in the world.
- The love of Jesus is developed in our hearts as we pray for others.
- Others-oriented prayer can include intercession, collaboration and liturgy.

Connection Time - 20 Minutes

Sermon Review - 20 Minutes

(Guides are updated weekly on the [Community webpage](#).)

Group Application - 40 Minutes

- **Group practice - do this together in Group**
 - **REVIEW** the previous week's individual practice.
 - **REVIEW** the Discussion Highlights for this week.
 - Pair up with someone in the group 1 on 1. Ask, "How can I pray for you?" Don't spend a lot of time talking about the situation; try to answer in one minute or less, and then pray for each other. Come back together as a group and talk about your experience.
 - Read the Lord's Prayer out loud together (Matthew 6:9-13; make sure everyone is reading the same translation).
 - **ASK:** Do you find it easier to pray about whatever is on your heart, or to have a plan where you are praying through specific topics or even written prayers (liturgy)? Why?
 - **ASK:** Why does it feel harder at times to pray with or for or in front of someone else?
 - **REVIEW** the memory verse and other resources for the month.
- **Individual practice - to do on your own throughout the week**
 - Text someone today or tomorrow and ask how you can pray for them. Put it on your calendar to pray for them at the same time every day throughout the next week.

Pray - 10 Minutes

WEEK 4

PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

- Decide in advance what you will do this week for the Group Practice. This can be anything that builds community and relationship. If your group missed a week, you can also use this week to make up for previous content.

Connection time - 20 Minutes

Sermon review - 20 Minutes

(Guide will be sent out to leaders each week in February.)

Group time - 40 Minutes

- **REVIEW** the previous week's individual practice.
- In addition to the usual connection time and sermon review, use this week's meeting to foster community and deepen relationships.
- **REVIEW** the memory verse and other resources for the month.

Pray - 10 Minutes

MONTHLY PRACTICE SUMMARY

When our prayers are oriented around God, others and ourselves, it allows us to develop a balanced and healthy intimacy with God that brings about change!

CORPORATE CHALLENGE

Develop a simple daily prayer plan answering the following questions:

- When will you pray?
- Where will you pray?
- Who/What will you pray for?

RESOURCES

MEMORY VERSE

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

BOOKS

- [*A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*](#), Paul E. Miller.
- [*How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*](#), Pete Greig.
- [*Letters to Malcolm*](#), C.S. Lewis.
- [*Prevailing Prayer*](#), D.L. Moody.

DEFINITION SERMONS

- [“Private Practice”](#)
- [“Prayer \(The Lord’s Prayer\)”](#)
- [“Prayer is the Key to a Transformed Life”](#)
- [“Unveiled” series](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Pray First App](#)