

a one week study on  
**PRAYER**



**DISCIPLESHIP  
CULTURE**





# DISCIPLESHIP CULTURE

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This material is designed to be used within a group setting  
for a one week study on a specific topic.  
Enjoy!



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# PRAYER

## Group Day 1 – Read & Discuss the Following

### This Week's Goal

*Understand the nature and power of prayer and give guidance on how to pray.*

Prayer is simply talking with God. It is how we maintain and grow our relationship with Him. Think of sitting down with a friend for lunch and the kinds of things you'd talk about: thoughts on current events, your worries and concerns, your hopes in the coming weeks, how you're feeling, etc. Part of prayer is communicating with God what's on your heart. Often people pray what they think they should pray, but some of the best, authentic prayers are when we are honest with God about how we're doing emotionally. God's love for us lets us know that He desires to hear from us, especially the things closest to our hearts.

But prayer is not just sitting down with God as a friend; rather, it is sitting down with the Creator of the universe. This means we seek Him for direction in our lives, we lay down our concerns before Him in the hope that He will do something about them, and we intercede (pray for others). There is true power in prayer, both to change us and to change our world. Prayer is an act of dependence on God's work in our world, rather than our own. As we practice prayer, it will continue to grow our faith in Him.

*Conversational Question* - take the temperature of your current prayer life

**What does prayer look like in your life right now?**

**How motivated are you to pray?**

**Do you believe God answers prayer?**

### Read Luke 18:1-8

**What is the point that Jesus is trying to make in this parable?** There are times when we can lose sight of a parable's basic message, but in this case we have the help of Luke's interpretation from verse 1: *"And he [Jesus] told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart."* Jesus wants us to take on the characteristics of this widow. She was persistent beyond what really made sense.

**Describe this judge. What motivates the judge to act?**

In the story, the widow's persistence paid off. In contrast to this is the biting challenge at the end of the parable. Will God find this kind of faith on the earth? The widow pursued an unrighteous judge, but we pursue a good judge. God promises in 1 John 5:14-15: *"And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him."* God listens to every prayer we send His way. He is eager to receive them and respond to them. How could we not have more persistent prayer than the widow? She had no assurance that the unrighteous judge would respond, but we have full confidence that God will! This should fuel a tenacity in our prayer life.

**If this is true, what keeps you from having persistent prayer like this?**

# PRAYER

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

Many believers have trouble grasping the fullness of what God promises in prayer. Read each of these verses and pause to consider the extent of what is promised.

- “If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:14).
- “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7).
- “Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24).
- “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24).

### *Conversational Questions*

**Do these promises seem too good to be true?**

**Have you ever prayed for something and it didn’t happen?**

**Why doesn’t God answer certain prayers?**

God is more responsive to prayer than we may believe, but that doesn’t mean He’s a genie in a bottle to be used whenever we want something from Him. Our prayers before God are meant to grow our relationship with Him and unite us in purpose.

As we grow in our relationship with the Father through prayer, His desires will become our desires. His love will become our love. This means that God will increasingly burden your heart to pray for the pain and brokenness of the world and to pray for your friends and enemies. This could include entering into a family member’s pain by asking for the Lord’s comfort in their life or pleading for God to provide freedom from a friend’s sin struggle. Injustice in the world prompts us to pray: “Lord, bring an end to the atrocity of human trafficking” or “Lord, please heal this racial divide.” Historically, prayer like this has sparked revival. Ask God to mobilize His church and bring revival to your church, to your nation, and to the unreached peoples of the world.

## A MODEL FOR PRAYER

Prayer requires no preparation. We can come to the Father through Jesus and speak from our hearts freely and openly. But rather than always letting your “stream of consciousness” flow, there should also be regular times of praying according to a structure. There are some good models (like The Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13) that can help guide our thoughts. The following is the ACTS prayer model that many have found beneficial:

- **ADORATION:** God is holy, and here we express our reverence to Him and praise Him for His many revealed qualities. It might be easier for us to think about what God has done for us; rather, focus your attention on His characteristics, on who He is. You might think of Scriptures that describe His goodness and pray them back to Him. For example: “*Blessed be the Lord, my rock... my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take refuge*” (Ps. 144:1-2).

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- **CONFESSION:** A sign of a healthy relationship is brutal honesty. We only create distance when we hold things back from God. Air out your sins before the Father, knowing that He promises to cleanse us from them (1 John 1:9). We exhibit trust in Him when we lay ourselves bare to His scrutiny. Ask God to reveal the sins He wants you to deal with, and then repent of them. *“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight”* (Ps. 51:3-4).
- **THANKSGIVING:** There is much to be grateful for as children of God. Thank him for the lavish grace that covers your sin each and every day. Pause to consider the last few hours. What has He provided for you today? Has He granted a unique blessing? Is there a difficulty that you can, in faith, thank Him for? *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”* (Eph 1:3).
- **SUPPLICATION:** Take your requests to God. In dependence, ask Him to meet your needs. Plead with Him to move, for He is faithful. *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”* (Phil 4:6).

### *Conversational Question*

**How do you plan on incorporating prayer into their life this week.**

Help each other think about praying when you wait for your morning coffee, as you go to lunch, after reading Scripture, when you're in the bathroom, etc. Share what has helped you get into the habit of prayer each day.

**Before ending your time together jump ahead to day six and plan your next gathering.**

# PRAYER

## Individual Day 2

**S** • 1 John 5:14-15

<sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

**O** • \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**A** • \_\_\_\_\_  
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**PRAY**

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## DAILY RUNDOWN:

**S** (scripture) • Read the assigned Scripture.

**O** (observation) • Write down observations about the scripture you read.

**A** (application) • Write down how you can apply the scripture to your everyday life.

**P** (prayer) • Pray to God about the verse or passage you focused on and anything else you want to lift up to Him. As you do so use the ACTS prayer model – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication

## Individual Day 3

**S** • John 14:13-14

<sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

**O** • \_\_\_\_\_  
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**A** • \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**PRAY**

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## Individual Day 4

**S** • John 15:7-8

<sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

**O** • \_\_\_\_\_  
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**A** • \_\_\_\_\_  
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**PRAY**

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# PRAYER

## Individual Day 5

**S** • James 4:2-3

<sup>2</sup>You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

**O** • \_\_\_\_\_  
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**A** • \_\_\_\_\_  
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**PRAY**

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### Group Day 6 – Gather & Pray

Instead of your normal group meeting, plan for your next gathering to be a time when you pray together. You could go on a prayer walk, meet together early in the morning for coffee, etc.

*Hint: Avoid restaurants or locations that would inhibit conversational prayer.*

### For Further Exploration:

As you develop a rhythm of prayer consider these words by Richard Foster from his book *Celebration of Discipline*. This book as well as his book titled *Prayer* are available for use as a DC curriculum.

*“Real prayer is something we learn. The disciples as Jesus, “Lord teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). They had prayed all their lives, and yet something about the quality and quantity of Jesus praying caused them to see how little they knew about prayer. If their prayer was to make any difference on the human scene, there were some things they needed to learn.*

*It was liberating to me to understand that prayer involved a learning process. I was set free to question, to experiment, even to fail, for I knew I was learning. For years I had prayed for many things and with great intensity, but with only marginal success. But then I saw that I might possibly be doing somethings wrong and could learn differently. I took the Gospels and cut out every reference to prayer and pasted them onto sheets of paper. When I could read Jesus’ is teaching on prayer at one sitting, I was shocked. Either the excuses and rationalizations for unanswered prayers I have been taught were wrong or Jesus’ words were wrong. I determined to learn to pray so that my experience conformed to the words of Jesus rather than try to make his words conform to my impoverished experience.”*