

The Power of Prayer

Prayer promotes growth in your relationship with God and others.



Practiced Prayer

Whether or not you grew up in a “Christian” home, you probably learned about prayer as you observed the attitudes and practices of family, friends, church members, or even characters in television shows and movies.

For fun, recite aloud any memorized prayers you still remember.

What do you remember about your concept of prayer as a child?

How has your concept of prayer changed since you have grown up? Why?

Project Report

The last session was on the power of words. Share something you remember about that session.



Barriers to Prayer

It's important to examine barriers to prayer so that you can identify what keeps you from praying more often.

1. What do you think keeps people from praying more than they do?
2. Why do you think many Christians spend so little time in prayer?

Benefits of Prayer

What does God's Word say about how prayer can help you grow in your relationship with God? Have each of the following passages read by a different person in the group. It's okay for one person to have more than one passage if you have a small group.

2 Chronicles 7:14

Philippians 4:6-7

Matthew 6:6

James 1:5

Matthew 26:41

James 5:16

Read each scripture and have the group discuss the benefits of prayer revealed in that passage.

4. If you've ever experienced one of the truths of the previous verses, tell about that experience. How have you received God's wisdom or peace, or how have you experienced God's presence through prayer?

Basic Components of Prayer

Because prayer is talking with God, it's a wonderful way to develop your relationship with him. But many people know little about what to do as they pray.

The Psalms are among the best known and loved writings of all literature. Many psalms are actually prayers, and from them we can learn about basic components of prayer.

Praise

The element of prayer that the Psalms are best known for is praise. Throughout the book of Psalms, David and other psalmists express their adoration of God.

5. Read Psalm 96:1-10. What does it mean to praise God? If a person were to consistently spend significant time praising God, how would that affect the way that person looks at problems they face?

6. Share something with the group that you can praise God for right now.

Confession

In Psalm 51, one of the greatest examples of confession in the Bible, David confesses his sins of committing adultery with Bathsheba and sending her husband off to be killed in battle.

7. Read Psalm 51:1-13. What was David seeking in his confession? What was the attitude behind his confession?

8. Read 1 John 1-9. What does God promise to do when we confess sin? Why is confession important in our relationship with God?

Supplication

Psalm 34 is often read and quoted to encourage us to bring our needs and desires to God in prayer.

9. Read Psalm 34:4-18. Reflect on the effect prayer can have in a person's life. Share your thoughts with the group.

10. Read Matthew 7:7-11. How should this passage affect our attitudes about making requests to God?

Praying Together

11. Read Matthew 18:19-20. How do these verses relate to praying with others? How would you benefit if you were to pray with other people consistently?

12. Identify two or three things that make praying in public difficult for you. What steps can you take to resolve one of those difficulties.



To end this session, have each person in the group take a turn saying a one or two sentence prayer. It can be praise, confession or request for a need.

Scriptures used in this session

2Ch 7:14 However, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves, pray, search for me, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear their prayer from heaven, forgive their sins, and heal their country.

Phi 4:6-7 Never worry about anything. But in every situation let God know what you need in prayers and requests while giving thanks. Then God's peace, which goes beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ Jesus.

Mat 6:6 When you pray, go to your room and close the door. Pray privately to your Father who is with you. Your Father sees what you do in private. He will reward you.

Jam 1:5 If any of you needs wisdom to know what you should do, you should ask God, and he will give it to you. God is generous to everyone and doesn't find fault with them.

Mat 26:41 Stay awake, and pray that you won't be tempted. You want to do what's right, but you're weak."

Jam 5:16 So admit your sins to each other, and pray for each other so that you will be healed. Prayers offered by those who have God's approval are effective.

Psa 96:1-10 Sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Sing to the LORD! Praise his name! Day after day announce that the LORD saves his people. Tell people about his glory. Tell all the nations about his miracles. The LORD is great! He should be highly praised. He should be feared more than all other gods because all the gods of the nations are idols. The LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are in his presence. Strength and beauty are in his holy place. Give to the LORD, you families of the nations. Give to the LORD glory and power. Give to the LORD the glory he deserves. Bring an offering, and come into his courtyards. Worship the LORD in his holy splendor. Tremble in his presence, all the earth! Say to the nations, "The LORD rules as king!" The earth stands firm; it cannot be moved. He will judge people fairly.

Psa 51:1-13 For the choir director; a psalm by David when the prophet Nathan came to him after David's adultery with Bathsheba. Have pity on me, O God, in keeping with your mercy. In keeping with your unlimited compassion, wipe out my rebellious acts. Wash me thoroughly from my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin. I admit that I am rebellious. My sin is always in front of me. I have sinned against you, especially you. I have done what you consider evil. So you hand down justice when you speak, and you are blameless when you judge. Indeed, I was born guilty. I was a sinner when my mother conceived me. Yet, you desire truth and sincerity. Deep down inside me you teach me wisdom. Purify me from sin with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear sounds of joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken dance. Hide your face from my sins, and wipe out all that I have done wrong. Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a faithful spirit within me. Do not force me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and provide me with a spirit of willing obedience. Then I will teach your ways to those who are rebellious, and sinners will return to you.

1Jo 1:1-9 The Word of life existed from the beginning. We have heard it. We have seen it. We observed and touched it. This life was revealed to us. We have seen it, and we testify about it. We are reporting to you about this eternal life that was in the presence of the Father and was revealed to us. This is the life we have seen and heard. We are reporting about it to you also so that you, too, can have a relationship with us. Our relationship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that we can be completely filled with joy. This is the message we heard from Christ and are reporting to you: God is light, and there isn't any darkness in him. If we say, "We have a relationship with God" and yet live in the dark, we're lying. We aren't being truthful. But if we live in the light in the same way that God is in the light, we have a relationship with each other. And the blood of his Son Jesus cleanses us from every sin. If we say, "We aren't sinful" we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. God is faithful and reliable. If we confess our sins, he forgives them and cleanses us from everything we've done wrong.

Psa 34:4-18 I went to the LORD for help. He answered me and rescued me from all my fears. All who look to him will be radiant. Their faces will never be covered with shame. Here is a poor man who called out. The LORD heard him and saved him from all his troubles. The Messenger of the LORD camps around those who fear him, and he rescues them. Taste and see that the LORD is good. Blessed is the person who takes refuge in him. Fear the LORD, you holy people who belong to him. Those who fear him are never in need. Young lions go hungry and may starve, but those who seek the LORD'S help have all the good things they need. Come, children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Which of you wants a full life? Who would like to live long enough to enjoy good things? Keep your tongue from saying evil things and your lips from speaking deceitful things. Turn away from evil, and do good. Seek peace, and pursue it! The LORD'S eyes are on righteous people. His ears hear their cry for help. The LORD confronts those who do evil in order to wipe out all memory of them from the earth. Righteous people cry out. The LORD hears and rescues them from all their troubles. The LORD is near to those whose hearts are humble. He saves those whose spirits are crushed.

Mat 7:7-11 "Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive. The one who searches will find, and for the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "If your child asks you for bread, would any of you give him a stone? Or if your child asks for a fish, would you give him a snake? Even though you're evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. So how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him?"

Mat 18:19-20 "I can guarantee again that if two of you agree on anything here on earth, my Father in heaven will accept it. Where two or three have come together in my name, I am there among them."