

Discipleship Plans

PRAYER



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TOPIC: Prayer Plan 1: Purpose of Prayer

KEY VERSE: Proverbs 15:8 (NASB)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Discuss what prayer is.
2. Identify some purposes for prayer.
3. Discover how and when to pray.

I. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What motivates you to pray?

What do you find yourself praying for most often?

II. SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSSION

"Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies" (Answer to Question #98 in the Westminster Catechism). We were created to have relationship with God through dependence on him, and our prayers express this dependence. Our confession of sin, our thankfulness to him, our petitions all show our need of God. Not only that, but Proverbs 15:8 says he delights in the prayer of the upright. God loves hearing from you as you pray.

1. John Piper said, "The essence of prayer is the expression of our dependence on God through requests." How does prayer show our dependence on God?

2. Read the following verses and discuss what are some of the purposes of prayer?

Matthew 26:41

John 14:13-14

James 5:16

John 15:7-8

Philippians 4:6-7

Colossians 4:3

2. Read Matthew 6:1-13.

- What did Jesus pray for and how do we model our prayers after his?
- If God already knows what we need before we ask, why do we still pray?
- What insights does this passage give you for your own prayer life?

3. Read the following verses and discuss how often we should pray.

Colossians 4:2

Romans 12:12

1 Thessalonians 4:17

III. TAKING ACTION

Colossians 4:2 says we are to be watchful and thankful when we pray. Being watchful keeps our hearts set on God and being thankful keeps our hearts joyful and patient, believing that God is God.

Simple Watchful and Thankful Activity -

Make a "T" chart - on the left side write "Prayer" and on the right side write "Answer." Write in some prayer requests and pray them often. Thank God for his goodness and faithfulness. As the prayers are answered, write down in the "Answer" column the outcome and give glory to God.

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TOPIC: Prayer Plan 2: Praying with Confidence

KEY VERSE: Hebrews 4:16

OBJECTIVES:

1. Learn about Jesus' intercession for his people.
2. Understand why we can be confident when we pray.
3. Discover verses to help build a foundation of confidence.

I. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What are your biggest obstacles when it comes to praying?

How do you become confident about praying?

II. SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSSION

In the Old Testament, God used the High Priest to perform sacrifices to atone for the people's sins. Once a year, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies, a place in the temple sealed off by a giant thick curtain, to offer an animal sacrifice. When Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice to take away the sins of all people, the curtain that separated us from the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom. Hebrews 4:16 says we can now approach the throne of grace with confidence, knowing Jesus' blood is interceding for us and God hears us.

1. Read Hebrews 4:14-16.

- In vs 15, what does it mean that Jesus sympathizes in our weaknesses?
- How does Jesus sympathizing with our weakness give us confidence when praying?
- According to this passage, what gives us confidence in approaching God?
- How can this encourage you when you pray?

2. Read Hebrews 10:19-23.

- According to this passage, what enables us to draw near to God in full assurance?
- Why does being cleansed from our sin give us confidence when we pray?
- What is the "confession of our hope" in vs 23, and how do we hold fast to it?
- How does holding fast to our confession of hope give us confidence when we pray?

3. Read Deuteronomy 4:7.

- What does this verse say about God when you pray?

III. TAKING ACTION

Read Psalm 4, entitled, "Evening Prayer to Trust in God."

- What gives the Psalmist confidence to offer up this prayer to God?
- What are some truths about God and his character in this passage?

Now, write out your own Prayer to Trust in God: First, write words of praise to God. Second, write out reasons you have confidence in coming to him in prayer using verses from this study. Third, confidently write out requests to God. Fourth, thank him for his faithfulness.

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TOPIC: Prayer Plan 3: Effective Prayer

KEY VERSE: 1 John 5:14-15

OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand the importance of praying according to God's will.
2. Develop a heart of faith in prayer, knowing that God hears us.
3. Realize the greatest goal of prayer is communion with God.

I. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Describe your prayer life now.

Can you remember a time when God answered your prayer(s)?

How would you define effective prayer?

II. SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSSION

In John 15:7, it says that if we abide in Jesus, and his words abide in us, we can ask what we desire and it shall be given to us. The word abide means to dwell in, participate with, and share in; it's ongoing and continual. Abiding is a connection - Jesus in me, I in Him. When we abide in Jesus, we are inviting him into our lives and saturating ourselves with his truth in Scripture, leading us to offer prayers that align with his will. As we abide, our knowledge grows of Jesus' desires and what he wants to accomplish in us, around us, and through us.

1. Read Romans 8:26-28 and 1 John 5:14-15. What does this tell us about praying according to God's will?
2. How do we know we are praying according to God's will?
3. Why is it important to seek God's will in prayer?
4. What does abiding in Christ look like and how does it affect daily prayer?

An example of praying according to God's will is to search the Scriptures about something you are praying for, whether it is a need, a circumstance, a hope, or desire. For example, if you are having a difficult time believing you are forgiven about a particular sin, look up Romans 8:1 or 1 John 1:9 and then pray these verses, believing this is God's will for you.

III. TAKING ACTION

Think of a circumstance or situation in your life that can be brought to God in prayer. Pray and thank God that he hears you, cares about you, and listens to you. Then search the Scriptures for ways that you can pray according to God's will in this area. Use the Scriptures below as a starting place or go to www.biblegateway.org and do a key word search. Write out your thoughts and Scripture findings.

Prayer for contentment Philippians 4:10-13

Prayer for freedom from sin Romans 6:5-11

Prayer for wisdom James 1:5-8

Prayer for strength 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

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TOPIC: Prayer Plan 4: Intercession

KEY VERSE: 1 Timothy 2:1

OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand intercessory prayer.
2. Learn three aspects of intercession: who, what, and how often.
3. Realize the significance of intercessory prayer for the Christian life.

I. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is the biggest obstacle for you when it comes to praying for others?
How might praying on behalf of others benefit you and the body of Christ?

II. SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSSION

Simply put, intercession is praying on the behalf of others. In 1 Timothy 2:1, Paul urges that prayers, supplications, thanksgivings, and intercessions be made for all people. Paul does not put any qualifiers on the people we are to pray for; we are encouraged to pray for everyone. In the next verse Paul says that intercession is pleasing in the sight of our Savior because He desires that all people would come to know the Truth and be saved. Praying for others is part of seeking to fulfill the Great Commission!

Praying for others may not always be easy. At times, there are people in our lives that we do not like, get annoyed with, have been hurt by, or we just forget to pray for others. Regardless if someone is a fellow believer or not, we as Christians are called to love, and a way that we can love is by praying for them. Sometimes our hearts need changing through the discipline of intercessory prayer. Oswald Chambers described intercession as bringing a person before God in prayer until God changes our attitude toward that person.

1. What to pray for - Read Colossians 1:9-12, Ephesians 1:15-20, Romans 8:26-27.
 - What does Paul ask God for on behalf the Colossians?
 - What does Paul pray for the Ephesians?
 - Based off Paul's prayers for the Colossians and Ephesians, what can we be praying for others?
 - How does the Holy Spirit help in intercession according to Romans?
2. Frequency in prayer - Read Ephesians 6:18-20, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Colossians 4:12
 - How often are we encouraged to pray for others?
 - How are life in the Spirit and intercessory prayer connected? (Ephesians 6:18)
 - What does it mean that Epaphras struggled in prayer for the Colossians?

III. TAKING ACTION

Think of one person in your life that you can intentionally start praying for this week. Read Colossians 1:9-12, Ephesians 1:15-19 and Romans 8:26-27 again and write down things you can pray for that person. For example - Colossians 1:9 "I pray that _____ would be filled with the knowledge of God's will and spiritual wisdom and understanding specifically in the area of _____(work, finances, relationships, future plans, etc _____."