

Leading Prayer in Small Groups

Small Group Leader Training

The purpose of prayer is that it works!

- God answers prayers
- We grow through prayer by learning our dependence on Him
- Proper prayers can change our perspective
- Praying together draws us closer to each other.

Don't fall into the rut of just sharing prayer requests and having one person pray.

Don't limit prayer to group time only.

The Lord's Prayer

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" – Give God praise for who He is and what He's done.

- Write down the different attributes of God and have each person draw one of the names and pray a prayer of thanks. (father, shepherd, God with Us, provider, protector, etc.)
- "Popcorn" or sentence prayers – "I praise you, God because..." "I thank you, God for..."
- Read a Psalm like Psalm 136 "liturgically." Have the leader read a line and the people respond, "His love endures forever."
- Have the group silently pray a Psalm or another passage. Have the members of the group close their eyes and listen as you read. Read it slowly, leaving space between lines for them to meditate on each line.

“Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” – This is a reminder that things are not as they should be. Pray that the Kingdom would break through more and more. The key is not to pray for “safe” things, but for the advancement of God's Kingdom.

- Pray a “funnel” prayer – Pray for God's Kingdom to come, beginning with broad prayers and moving to situations “closer to home.” Have one person pray for each level.
 - **World** – pray for peace, the end of hunger, war, suffering. Try to pray specifically for situations around the world. Pray that the Church would be Christ's hands and feet to the world.
 - **Nation** – pray for wisdom for our leaders, that our society would live out Kingdom principles.
 - **City** – pray for our leaders, pray for current situations (the economy, flood, etc.), pray that people would be drawn to Christ
 - **Church/Small Group** – pray that we would not be comfortable, but that we would be effective in reaching our beyond our walls serving and sharing Jesus.
 - **Personal** – have each person pray for their own requests. Rather than sharing them before praying them, allow the prayer itself to be the sharing.
- Bring a few newspapers and have members look through them and pray for different people, leaders, and situations around the globe.

“Give us today our daily bread.” – Pray for your needs, but be simple and “daily.”

- Share prayer requests around the circle and pray for them.
- Have each person pray for the person on their right or left.
- Pray for each request as it's shared.
- Break into pairs or threes and have people pray together.
- For particular “significant needs” place a chair in the middle of the room and lay hands on the person/couple and pray for them. Try a prayer for healing this way.
- Limit prayers to immediate family or significant friends (i.e. don't pray a lot for someone's cousin's best friend's uncle)
- Leaders should model transparency (have them pray for a particular spiritual struggle or even personal issue, i.e. financial difficulties, relationship difficulties, etc.)

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” – Prayers of confession or healing of relationships

- These can be the most intimate prayers.
- Read a passage about forgiveness or confession. (Psalm 51, 1 John 1:9, James 5:16)
- Prayers can be silent or out loud if the group have developed that kind of intimacy.
- Prayers of confession will often be part of a larger prayer.
- You may do a lesson on forgiveness or reconciliation, etc. If you do, open it up to members sharing about broken relationships. Encourage them to follow up and seek reconciliation or forgiveness (Matthew 18). Have the group pray for them.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” – Prayer for spiritual strength.

- People may share struggles they currently have, pray together for strength. Have group members pray for a specific person during the week.

“Prayers of blessing”

- Either take turns (one member or couple per week), prayer for someone with a special situation (a specific need, milestone, birthday, etc.), or spend an entire group period praying for each other one by one.