

When God's People Pray
6 session DVD

A Message for the Group Leader:

This DVD series will powerfully equip your group to believe in & practice the power of prayer. I trust that God will use it in the lives in your group.

While there is an accompanying "Participant's Guide" for this study, after reviewing this guide, I have found that there are too many questions to adequately cover in the time provided of a typical CCC Home Group. I have provided discussion sheets for each session that I offer here to help you group discuss the material presented and apply it to their lives.

As for the format of the Video & discussion, I suggest you watch the first session to see how the producers have broken up each session. This has been done to coincide with the questions in the "Participant's Guide."

My suggestion would be that you watch all of the video segments for a session in a row, not taking several discussion breaks as the DVD directs, but rather saving the discussion for the end of your time.

In my estimation, this seems the best format for most Home Groups at Cottonwood. If you choose to do otherwise, that is fine, of course, and up to you.

The questions I have provided here are inspired by the Participant's guide, but have been altered, re-worded, or added in order to provide a discussion with greater emphasis on practical life application.

I urge you to make adequate time for prayer at the end of your discussion. Helping your group to practice prayer, I believe, is the most powerful aspect of this series. Even if your group is relatively uneasy about praying out loud with other people, challenge each person to participate and I trust that you'll experience more of God together!

I hope that they prove a blessing to you and your group. If you have any suggestions on how to improve this discussion series, please don't hesitate to contact me with your thoughts or improvements.

At your service,

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When God's People Pray
Session 1 – God's Heart For Us.

Icebreaker: When is a memorable time that God answered one of your prayers?

Watch all of the video segments, waiting until the end of the session to pause for discussion.

Break into groups of 4-5 and discuss the following questions:

1. What most impacted you from the teaching or testimony in the video segments you just watched?
2. If we believe that God knows all things, even before we ask Him for help, what do you think might be God's purpose in not answering our prayer right away? What might He be trying to do in our lives when we are called to 'wait on God' to answer prayer?
3. Read Matthew 7:7-8. If you really believed this promise from God (& others like it), how would your prayers be affected?
4. Read Ephesians 2:4-5, Ps. 86:5-7, Ps. 89:8. What do these verses reveal about God & his heart to answer those who cry out to him?
5. How great is your tendency to try and face challenges or difficulties on your own, without God's help? What usually happens when you do this?
6. Evaluate yourself with these questions: Where is your level of belief that God wants to answer your prayers, show you mercy & pour out His grace in your life? In what ways are you currently struggling to believe the promises of God? In what ways are you drawn to seek God, eagerly praying and expecting God to answer with His blessing?

Prayer: Take 10-15 minutes to pray with your discussion group & do the following:

Share a need or problem that seems insurmountable. Pray with your group together. Praise God for who He is as revealed in the promises you read in questions #3 & #4. Trust God together to come through in answer to your prayers.

When God's People Pray
Session 2 – The Amazing Power of Prayer

Icebreaker: Who is somebody you know that you would describe as a prayer warrior or a man/woman of prayer? How have they challenged or encouraged you in prayer?

Watch all of the video segments, waiting until the end of the session to pause for discussion.

Break into groups of 4-5 and discuss the following questions:

1. What most impacted you from the teaching or testimony in the video segments you just watched?
2. Why do you think it is significant that Jesus' disciples asked him how to pray (and not how to preach, heal, etc.) in Luke 11?
3. Why is it important to pray & ask God for His leading & empowering by the Holy Spirit? What is the result when we rely on our own abilities & understanding? (See Gal. 6:7-8)
4. Jim Cymbala paints a picture of prayer that involves work, trawling, staying up all hours of the night in spiritual battle, desperation. How do these descriptions challenge your current view of prayer?
5. Read Eph. 6:18. What keeps you from always praying?
6. Evaluate yourself with these questions: How deeply do you desire to know God? Are there things that keep you from approaching His throne of grace with your prayers & requests? Do you want to experience the Holy Spirit filling your life in new, fresh, powerful ways?

Prayer: Take 10-15 minutes to pray with your discussion group & do the following:

1st - take 3-4 minutes to God to reveal any sin in your life, then silently confess & repent (change your mind about) that sin.

2nd - share 1 or 2 things you believe God wants you to trust Him for in prayer. Praise God for allowing you to enter His presence in prayer & for listening to you every time you pray. Pray for revival. Pray for a fresh work of the Holy Spirit in your lives – in the lives of your family, your church, your community, your country. Ask God to fill & empower you with a fresh supply of the Holy Spirit to carry out His work.

When God's People Pray
Session 3 – Obedience in Prayer

Icebreaker: What was a memory you have of a reward you received for doing something well at home or on the job?

Watch all of the video segments, waiting until the end of the session to pause for discussion.

Break into groups of 4-5 and discuss the following questions:

1. Read Isaiah 59:1-2. What does this verse have to say about the connection between our obedience to God & His Word and God's response to our prayers?
2. Read 1 John 3:21-23. What does this verse say that we can expect from in prayer God if we walk in obedience?
3. How do bitterness & other sin affect our relationships with God & others? How does it affect our prayers?
4. Why do you think it is easy to overlook our need to confess our sins and to keep trying to get by on our own power, rather than bringing our sins to God for healing & forgiveness?
5. Read 1 Peter 3:7, 12. What are the warnings for husbands and everyone in these verses? Have you experienced a time in life when it seemed like your prayers were hitting the ceiling (i.e. not being heard by God)? If so, do you think sin was the problem?
6. Read Psalm 139:23-24. How could regularly asking God to search your heart for sin & confessing what he reveals benefit your relationship with God & others?

Prayer: Take 10-15 minutes to pray with your discussion group & do the following:

1st – Spend 4-5 minutes on your own: First, read 1 John 1:5-7. Then ask God to convict you of your sin; to shine His light into any dark areas of your life; to show you anything that is hindering your relationship with Him.

2nd – Spend 10-11 minutes praying with others: Start by reading Psalm 32:1-2 together aloud. Then lift up your prayers, need & problems together, asking God to prepare & arm you for whatever He wants to do in your life or through your life.

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Session 4 – The Word of God and Prayer

Icebreaker: What was an important promise to you that someone made and kept?

Watch all of the video segments, waiting until the end of the session to pause for discussion.

Break into groups of 4-5 and discuss the following questions:

1. How well do you know God's Word, and how does that knowledge affect your prayer life?
2. What do you think is the difference between 'reciting your petitions' to God and praying in faith & confidence that God will answer according to His promises?
3. How have you reacted to 'unanswered prayer' or disappointments in prayer (i.e. when something gets worse, instead of better)?
4. Read Ps. 19:7-8. According to these verses, what does God's Word accomplish? How would this be helpful in unanswered prayer or disappointments in prayer?
5. Read Ps. 119:147-148. How does this prayer by the psalmist challenge your commitment to God's Word?
6. Read through the scripture promises on the back of this sheet. Which promise speaks to you about a need you have or a prayer you are praying or have prayed in the past?

Prayer: Take 10-15 minutes to pray with your discussion group & do the following:

Thank God for being faithful to hear the prayers of His obedient people and for fulfilling all the promises found in His Word. Then, using the promises each person identified in #6 as a guide, pray for each related request, in faith & confidence that God will come through. Pray those promises back to God, who delights in answering the prayers of his people.

Scripture Promises

Jeremiah 29:11-12 - For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

Psalms 46:1 - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Isaiah 54:10 - "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Matthew 7:7-8 - Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Psalms 55:22 - Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

Psalms 34:18 - The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

1 Peter 5:4 - And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 - But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

Psalms 91:4 - He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Psalms 84:11 - For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

Matthew 5:8 - Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

James 1:5 - If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

2 Timothy 1:7 - For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

When God's People Pray
Session 5 – Why Prayer Matters

Icebreaker: What is a goal or situation in life that required you to exert great perseverance?

Watch all of the video segments, waiting until the end of the session to pause for discussion.

Break into groups of 4-5 and discuss the following questions:

1. How can you see the benefit (or perhaps the need) of intercessory prayer as a ministry within the church?
2. Read Eph. 1:17-19, Eph. 3:16-19. How do you think praying such intercessory prayers like this for people you know might impact their lives?
3. Read Eph. 6:18. What has kept you from persevering in prayer in the past? (i.e. unanswered prayers, hopelessness, not in the mood, just don't feel like it, etc.)
4. How can the promises of God help us to remain strong in prayer through the spiritual battle?
5. Read Psalm 119:89-90 & James 1:17. How does God's faithful, unchangeable nature influence your hope in Him & how you pray?

Prayer: Take 10-15 minutes to pray with your discussion group & do the following:

1st – Spend 4-5 minutes on your own: Think about someone you know who needs intercessory prayer. Pray quietly for the person God has brought to your mind.

2nd – Spend 10-11 minutes praying with others: Briefly share with others the person you prayed for. Be sensitive to personal situations or details that may be inappropriate to identify. Then lift up each person together in prayer. Expect God to work, for He says, "nothing is too hard for Me."

When God's People Pray
Session 6 – Creating a Prayer Ministry in Your Church

Icebreaker: What is something that our church does really well?

Watch all of the video segments, waiting until the end of the session to pause for discussion.

Break into groups of 4-5 and discuss the following questions:

1. How do you think a greater emphasis on prayer could improve the life of our church?
2. If prayer is a barometer of spiritual maturity, how would you assess yourself, on a scale from one to ten (ten being the highest)? Why did you select that number?
3. What specific things could you do to encourage prayer in our church?
4. Read John 15:4-5. How do you think prayer is related to 'remaining' or 'abiding' in the Vine that is Christ? What might prayer be related to good fruit being produced in our lives?
5. How convinced are you that prayer must be a main priority in your life & in the spiritual life of our church?
6. Read Isaiah 56:7. Jesus quoted this verse when expressing His desire that the church would be a 'house of prayer.' What are some specific ways that you or our church could help instill an 'atmosphere of prayer'?

Prayer: Take 10-15 minutes to pray with your discussion group & do the following:

Praise God for His unchanging character. Thank God for His commitment to keep promises & to hear and answer prayer. Ask God for wisdom in how to apply what you've learned about prayer to your own life & possibly in your church. Ask God to give you perseverance in prayer when difficulties come your way. Close with thanksgiving and certainty that God will do great things in your life, your group, & your church in the days ahead as you keep praying.