

Lord, Teach Us To Pray

Session 1: Why Pray?

Icebreaker:

When do you feel most at peace during your day or when is the most peaceful part of your day?

Worship:

Firm Foundation (He Won't) | *Maverick City*
Jesus, I Come | *Elevation Worship*
Waiting Here For You | *Jesus Culture*

Introduce the Session:

Key verse: "Lord, teach us to pray" – Luke 11:1

In this first session of The Prayer Course, we'll unpack the importance of prayer and the different topics covered across the course. Begin by opening in prayer.

Watch: [The Prayer Course - Session 1](#)

(If you would like to watch a shorter portion of the video, start at minute 6:08.)

Bible passages

Luke 11:1-4, Matthew 6:6-8 - Message translation, Romans 8:18-25

Summary points:

- We can ask Jesus to help teach us to pray.
- Prayer is like a toolbox - there are lots of different ways of praying.
- Keep it simple. Keep it real. Keep it up.

Discussion:

Q: What do you find difficult about prayer? What do you find easy? Why do you think prayer can often feel hard?

Pete says the best piece of advice is to "Keep it simple, keep it real and keep it up."

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[KEEP IT SIMPLE: “Your prayer life is at its best at its simplest.”]

Read: Luke 11:1-4

Q: What part of the Lord’s Prayer do you tend to gravitate towards? Is there a part of the prayer that seems most difficult to practice?

[KEEP IT REAL: “Don’t role-play before God.”]

Read: Matthew 6:6-8 in *The Message*

Q: Do you feel like you can be honest with God when you pray? Why or why not?

[KEEP IT UP: “Don’t give up praying too soon.”]

Read: Romans 8:18-25 (or continue reading through verse 39)

Q: Do you find it challenging to persevere in prayer? How are you encouraged through this passage to keep going?

Read: Luke 11:5-12 and Luke 18:1-8

Q: How do these passages challenge you to pray with faith?

Connect & Pray:

Split into small groups and share one way you’d like to grow in prayer and your relationship with God over the course. Take a moment to pray together, asking God to teach you how to pray.

Resources:

- [Toolshed](#) – an index of thirty prayer tools provided by The Prayer Course (prayercourse.org).
- **Praying the Lord’s Prayer** - resource provided on the next page. If you have time, consider leading your Lifegroup through this practice. Provide this resource to your Lifegroup members so they can also use this resource throughout the week.
- [Lectio365 app](#) – share this great tool with your Lifegroup to help them pray the Bible every day.

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Praying the Lord's Prayer

(adapted from [Practicing the Way](#): John Mark Comer)

1. Put away your phones or any other distractions, and get into a comfortable, but alert position.

2. (Leader) Invite the Holy Spirit to come and pray through the Lord's prayer, like this...

"Our Father..."

- Take a moment and think about the idea of God as your Father, with good intentions toward you. If you want, imagine God in your mind's eye. Picture His face. Make eye contact with Him.

"In heaven..."

- Take a moment to think about the idea that God is all around you. As you breathe in and out, imagine yourself breathing in and out more of the Holy Spirit.

"Hallowed by Your name..."

- Spend a few minutes just sitting with the Father in joyful, grateful, worship. You might want to sit in silence for a few moments. Or sing a chorus. Or rattle off a list of things you're grateful for. Or praise God with specific things you love about Him.
- If you are in a group, encourage people to make their expressions of praise and gratitude out loud, one at a time. (E.g. "Father, thank You for Your kindness." "Father, thank you for loving me.")

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..."

- Spend a few minutes asking for God's will to be done in your city/church/community/life.
- Think of *specific* things to pray for.
- One at a time, spend time as a group verbally giving to God specific things in your life that you're wrestling with control over. A simple prayer of, "Your will be done in _____," is a great place to start.

"Give us each day our daily bread..."

- Spend a few minutes praying for specific needs and wants in your life or that of your community.
- This is also a great time to pray over specific people in the community who need something: a job, healing, wisdom to make a decision, etc. Get them in the middle of the room and pray over them.
- If you are in a group, consider splitting into groups of 2-3 and having each person share one area of need in their life. After each person has shared, pray for one another, asking God to meet that need.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors..."

- Spend a few minutes in quiet asking God for forgiveness for specific areas in your life and releasing others to forgiveness.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

- Spend a few minutes praying against temptation (the word can also be translated trouble) in your life.
 - Pray against specific sins....
 - Pray against any kind of evil - spiritual evil (demonic), human evil, natural evil, etc.
 - Pray against bad things in your life or community, and *for* God's blessing - the divine flow of good things into your life and community.

4. (Leader) Close in a prayer of gratitude to the Father for hearing you.

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Session 2: Adoration

Icebreaker:

If you had to describe how you're feeling right now as an amusement park ride, what ride are you on? (Give a one-sentence explanation as to why.)

Worship:

We Praise You | *Bethel Music*

Give You Praise | *Antioch Music*

Be Enthroned | *Bethel Music*

Memorize: Take a moment to read the Lord's Prayer together. Encourage your Lifegroup to memorize these verses.

Matthew 6:9-13 NASB 1995 [amended]

"Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our [trespasses] as we forgive those who [trespass] against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Introduce the Session:

Key verse: "Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name" – Matthew 6:9

- In this session we'll explore how we can enjoy God's presence in praise and worship.
- Begin the session by opening in prayer.

Watch: [The Prayer Course - Session 2](#)

Bible passages

Acts 4:23-31

Summary points:

- Start by recognizing God is God.
- Worship puts things back into perspective.
- Use P.R.A.Y - Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield

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Discussion:

Q. Why do you think that we most often associate prayer with asking, rather than worship and adoration?

Pete talked about giving ourselves to God in prayer through adoration and thanksgiving which leads us to intimacy and enjoying God's presence.

“Adoration is the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.”
– *Book of Common Prayer*

“In commanding us to glorify him, God is inviting us to enjoy him.” – C.S. Lewis

Q. Do you enjoy spending time in prayer with God? When are the times that prayer feels most enjoyable?

Q. Pete says that prayer is primarily about relationship with God: “It's relational, not transactional”. How does this change your perspective of coming to God in prayer?

Pete explained the prayer in Acts 4 by helping us see one of the purposes of worship before request. Worship allowed the church to “recontextualize their own crisis in the bigger narrative of God.” In other words, when we look up first [telescope view] rather than just at our problems [microscope], it helps us gain a better perspective of who God is and what He is doing.

Q: Where do you need to change your perspective right now about a situation? How can you practice getting a 'telescope' view?

Q. In the Acts passage, the early church put their own crisis into perspective by worshipping. What are the practical things you could do this week to foster an attitude of worship in your daily routine?

Practice as a Community:

Practice thanksgiving and praise by reflecting on Psalm 27.

As a group, read Psalm 27 out loud together. You might like to delegate different verses to different people or encourage just one person to read it out. Then, take time to **Pause and Rejoice**:

Pause: Take a moment in silence and invite the Holy Spirit to help you reflect on what you've just read.

Rejoice: Encourage group members to all speak out prayers of adoration. You can do this individually or have everyone offer up praise altogether. They might like to use the Psalm as inspiration, too.



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Leader's note:

If you have time and it feels appropriate for your group, you might like to continue the PRAY steps by **asking** and **yielding**.

Ask: Read Psalm 27 again. Notice where David starts his requests in verse 4 – by desiring to be in the Lord's presence. This first request sets the stage for his remaining requests in the psalm and places his confidence in God. Challenge your group to start their requests by asking God to reveal His presence and take a moment to remember where He has rescued you in the past.

Yield: Open your hands in an act of surrender. Verses 13-14 express confidence in the Lord, even before his requests are answered. Declare your confidence in the goodness of God and express your willingness to wait for Him.

Resources:

- [How to pray the Psalms](#)
- [How to practice Christian meditation](#)
- [How to pray creatively](#)
- [How to practice the presence of God](#)

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Session 3: Petition

Icebreaker:

A genie appears and grants you a wish for someone else in the world. Who and what do you make a wish for?

Worship:

A Thousand Hallelujahs | Brooke Ligertwood

Jireh | Maverick City Music

God, I Look to You | Bethel Music

Memorize: Take a moment to read the Lord's Prayer together. Encourage your Lifegroup to memorize these verses.

Matthew 6:9-13 NASB 1995 [amended]

"Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our [trespasses] as we forgive those who [trespass] against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Introduce the Session:

Key verse: "Give us this day our daily bread." – Matthew 6:11

- In this session we'll unpack the significance of asking God in prayer.
- Begin the session by opening in prayer.

Watch: [The Prayer Course - Session 3](#)

Bible passages

Matthew 7:7-11, Matthew 18:19

Summary points

- The Father loves to give good gifts.
- Traffic lights: Yes, Wait, No.
- Sometimes we need to "stack dominoes" and persevere in prayer.

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Discussion:

Read Matthew 7:7-11.

Q: Although God knows our need, why does He still want us to articulate it to Him?

Q: Where in your life do you assume God knows what you need/want, but you have neglected to ask? Why?

Read Philippians 4:6-7 and John 16:23-24.

Q: Why do you think there is an open invitation for us to ask the Father for things in Jesus' name?

Q: Praying "in the name of Jesus" means praying in accordance to His purposes and character. How does that change the perspective of how you pray or what you pray for?

Q: Think of an area where you are currently asking God for something. What would it look like to change your prayer to be "in the name of Jesus?"

Pete uses the traffic light analogy to describe different ways God responds to our prayers:

Green: Yes

Amber: Wait / Persevere

Red: No

Q. Are you experiencing a "green", "amber" or "red" response to any specific prayers at the moment? Share your experiences together.

Leader's note:

You might like to split into smaller groups at this stage so that everyone has a chance to respond honestly.

Practice as a Community:

In smaller groups, take time to pray for one another's prayer requests. Remember the following as you pray:

Pray incrementally: Pray for a specific next step, rather than jumping to the top of the staircase.

Pray the promises of God: Is there a specific promise that relates to the situation?

You also might like to follow the P.R.A.Y model – start by pausing and welcome the Holy Spirit, then rejoice and give thanks before asking. Remember to yield and surrender everything back to God as you finish.

Resources:

- [Prayer Tool: Palms Up, Palms Down](#)
- [How to Pray the Promises of God](#)

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Session 4: Intercession

Icebreaker:

If you had to describe how you're feeling right now as a weather pattern, what's your forecast?

Worship:

Build Your Kingdom Here | *Rend Collective*

Praise Before My Breakthrough | *Bryan & Katie Torwalt*

How Can I Keep From Singing | *Chris Tomlin*

Hosanna | *Hillsong United*

Memorize: Take a moment to read the Lord's Prayer together. Encourage your Lifegroup to memorize these verses.

Matthew 6:9-13 NASB 1995 [amended]

"Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our [trespasses] as we forgive those who [trespass] against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Introduce the Session:

Key verse: "Your kingdom come" – Matthew 6:10

- In this session, we'll explore the power and importance of praying on behalf of others.
- Begin the session by opening in prayer.

Watch: [The Prayer Course - Session 4](#)

Bible passages

2 Chronicles 7:13-14, Exodus 17:8-13, Genesis 18:22-33

Summary points

- When God's people intercede, God intervenes.
- There is power in our free will.
- 4 steps of intercession: get informed, get inspired, get indignant, get in synch.

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Discussion:

Q: What feels like the main struggle that keeps you from interceding for others? (*For example: fear of failure, tiredness, self-focus, lack of trust, feeling your prayers are not powerful or effective, etc.*)

“Our free wills are powerful; they can release or restrict the purposes of God.”

Read Exodus 17:8-13, Genesis 18:22-33, and James 5:13-18.

Q. How do these passages affect the way that we come to God in intercessory prayer?

Q. Have you ever had a feeling that you needed to pray for something or someone? What happened? Was your faith built or challenged through this intercession? (*Next week we'll be looking at unanswered prayer.*)

“Prayer isn't about trying to get God to say amen to what I want; prayer is about me saying amen to God's will...”

Q. What would it look like for you to pray this week with this perspective?

Q: What is something that God is calling you to intercede for right now? What scripture can you pray that will give you confidence that you are praying into God's will? (*If you don't know, ask others in the group to help you find a scripture that you can use.*)

Practice as a Community:

As a group, spend some time interceding for your community, city or nation. Follow the 4 steps below.

1. **Get informed:** learn the facts by checking the news or updates about the people you're praying for.

Leader's note:

You might like to find some facts, prayer points or updates ahead of this session. If you have adopted an overseas worker, this is a great time to pray for them.

2. **Get inspired:** What is God saying about this? Invite the Holy Spirit to speak into the situations you're interceding for.

3. **Get indignant:** Engage your own heart and allow yourself to think and feel honestly as you pray.

4. **Get in synch:** Engage together. You might like to all pray out loud at once or pray in a circle so that everyone has a chance to pray and be heard.

Resources:

- [How to run a non-boring prayer meeting](#)
- [TWI](#)

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Session 5:

Unanswered Prayer

Icebreaker:

What's one word people mostly use to describe you?

Worship:

Worthy Of It All | CeCe Winans

God Really Loves Us | Crowder feat. Maverick City Music

Introduce the Session:

Key verse: "Your will be done" – Matthew 6:10

In this session we'll be tackling the challenges and realities when our prayers aren't answered.

Begin the session by opening in prayer.

Watch: [The Prayer Course - Session 5](#)

Bible passages:

Mark 14:32-36, Daniel 3, Romans 5:3-5

Summary points:

- The Bible is honest about unanswered prayer – we are part of a faith that is all about wrestling.
- God's world, God's war, God's will.
- God's silence is not the same as His absence.

Discussion:

Q. What did you find most helpful or most challenging in the video?

Q. Have you ever prayed and not received the answer you expected or believed for? How did it impact you?

- Pete suggested that during times of unanswered prayer, we ask God "where are you in this" rather than "why is this happening". Have you tried to do this before? How did that change the way the situation impacted you?

Q. What did you think when Pete talked about "God's world, God's war, God's will"?

Q. Let's read Mark 14:32-36 together. Discuss how Jesus' prayer in this moment is an example for praying through difficult circumstances in our own lives. *(Remember how Pete outlined this prayer: Jesus first anchored Himself in God's love; second, affirmed God's power; third, was radically honest with God.)*

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Q. Do you have any other questions about unanswered prayers that you would like to discuss?

Connect & Pray:

Pete says that, “Even when we don’t understand, we can still trust.” Take time to stop, pause and recommit to trusting God together as a group. You might like to play some worship music and spend time sitting and reflecting.

Leader’s note:

If this is a difficult step for members of your group, you might like to pray specifically into their situation, or you might like to read a Psalm of Lament together (see the Toolshed for instructions and directions on this).

Practice as a Community: *(If you don’t have time in Lifegroup, send this home with your group.)*

Try writing your own Lament Psalm.

Here are some great examples: Psalm 10, 13, 22, 60, 69, or 80.

1. Put away your phones or any other distractions, and get into a comfortable, but alert position.
2. Invite the Holy Spirit to come.
3. Draw to mind an unanswered prayer in your life.
4. With that unanswered prayer in your mind, have somebody read Psalm 13 (or another lament psalm of your choosing) out loud. Do your best to pray it, not just listen to it.
5. Then sit in silence for a few minutes, just thinking about and feeling the weight of lament in your own life, community, or world. It can be lament over unanswered prayer or just emotional pain.
6. Try expressing your lament through writing, using this typical pattern of a Lament Psalm:
 - a. **Protest:** Tell God what is wrong.
 - b. **Petition:** Tell God what you want Him to do about it.
 - c. **Praise:** Expression of trust in God today, based in His character and His action in the past, even if you can’t yet see the outcome.
7. Ask people who are willing to share their “lament psalm.” Don’t censor yourself. Flip the edit button to the “off” position and be honest with God and your Community.
8. End by singing a worship song or doing your best to express faith in God in the face of unanswered prayer.
9. Thank Jesus that he went through unanswered prayer and emotional pain in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, and that he will lead and guide us through those kinds of moments.

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Resources:

- [Toolshed](#) – an index of thirty prayer tools provided by The Prayer Course.
- [How to Lament](#)
- [Lament leads to Hope](#) – Resiliency Podcast
 - Excerpt from the Podcast:

“What is the difference between complaining to God and lamenting to God?”

Lament, when we do it in the way that’s laid out in the Psalms, is a form of praise. It’s not a complaint.

When you look at complaint, it’s an accusation against the character and nature of God. It’s putting God on trial. Like the Hebrew children in the desert when they brought their complaints to Moses. They were putting God on trial. “You told us if we came out here that you would lead us and take care of us. But here we are. We don’t have any water, we don’t have any food.”

But in the Psalms, we see the same people, Israel, asking God to answer according to His character, according to His nature, His unfailing love.

So, in that way we can say that a complaint is an accusation against God that maligns His character, but a lament is an appeal to God based on confidence in His character.”

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Session 6: Contemplation

Icebreaker:

If you could be an expert in one thing, what would it be and why?

Worship:

The Blessing | Kari Jobe, Cody Carnes
Awake My Soul | Hillsong

Introduce the Session:

Key verse: “On earth as it is in heaven” – Matthew 6:10

In this session, we’ll discover how spending time with God in silence can enrich our relationship with Him.

Begin the session by opening in prayer.

Watch: [The Prayer Course - Session 6](#)

Bible passages

Psalm 19, Psalm 62, Psalm 46, 1 Thessalonians 5, Matthew 6:6, Isaiah 6, Psalm 1

Summary points:

- Contemplative prayer is silent enjoyment of God’s loving presence.
- The contemplation journey has 3 stages:
 - Meditation: “Me and God”
 - Contemplation: “God and me”
 - Communion: “Only God”

Discussion:

Q. What did you find most helpful or most challenging in the video?

Q. How has your view of contemplation changed after watching the video?

Q. It can be difficult to make time to pause and contemplate God. What rhythms could you put in place to grow this type of prayer in your life?



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Practice as a Community:

As a group, stop to practice contemplation.

You may want to play some instrumental music in the background. If you need a suggestion, check out Tony Anderson's albums.

“We are seeking to focus our minds fully on Jesus.”

Encourage everyone in your group to sit quietly and comfortably and take time to be still. Group members could quietly reflect on a Psalm, such as Psalm 19, if they like.

As you practice contemplation, remember that contemplative prayer is *silent enjoyment of God's loving presence*.

Try to move through these stages towards communion with God.

- Meditation: “Me and God”
- Contemplation: “God and me”
- Communion: “Only God”

Leader's note:

Remember, the aim of your time is to individually engage with God in silence, not praying together. Allow enough space and time for this to happen – don't rush it. At the end of your time together, you might like to share your thoughts and reflections on the time and how it felt.

Resources:

- [Toolshed](#) – an index of thirty prayer tools provided by The Prayer Course.
- [Centering Prayer App](#)
- [Pause App](#)

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Session 7: Listening

Icebreaker:

Your house is on fire, everyone is safe, and you have 30 seconds to run back into the house to grab one thing. What are you choosing to grab and why?

Worship:

House of Miracles | Brandon Lake
Way Maker | Leeland

Introduce the Session:

Key verse: "Give us today our daily bread" – Matthew 6:10

In this session, we'll unpack the practical ways we can tune into hearing God's voice.

Begin the session by opening in prayer.

Watch: [The Prayer Course - Session 7](#)

Bible passages

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Summary points:

- We are designed to walk and talk with God.
- Slow down, Soften up.
- When listening to God, remember ABC: Advice, Bible, Common Sense.

**** (There might be times where God's voice goes against advice from others and may not make sense, but it will always be backed by scripture) ****

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Discussion:

- Q. What did you find most helpful or most challenging in the video?
- Q. What are some of the ways you hear God speak to you?
- Q. What practical actions could you take this week to make time for listening to God?
- Q. How can we encourage one another to “keep our hearts soft” in the busyness of our daily lives?

Practice as a Community:

Practice listening to God together. There are a few ways you might like to do this, depending on your group. Here are some options:

- Split into small groups of 3 people and take turns listening to God for one person at a time, making sure it is encouraging and aligns with the Bible and character of Jesus.
- Practice the Lectio Divina together as a group. You might like to explore the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:13-16.

Remember to:

- Read it – Familiarization
- Explore it – Imagination
- Pray it – Conversation
- Enjoy it – Celebration

Leader's note

Check out the Prayer Tool below on Lectio Divina, which includes instructions for groups.

Resources:

- [Toolshed](#) – an index of thirty prayer tools provided by The Prayer Course.
- [Lectio Divina](#)

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Session 8: Spiritual Warfare

Icebreaker:

You've been exiled to a deserted island, and you can take three things with you. What three non-essential items are you taking with you?

Worship:

When you Walk Into the Room | Bryan and Katie Torwalt
Sound Mind | Bryan and Katie Torwalt

Introduce the Session:

Key verse: "Deliver us from the evil one" – Matthew 6:13

In this session, we'll look closely at the ways we can pray God's kingdom come in the midst of a spiritual battle.

Begin the session by opening in prayer.

Watch: [The Prayer Course - Session 8](#)

Bible passages

Ephesians 6:11-14

Summary points:

- The Bible is clear that we're in a spiritual battle.
- Jesus was speaking into a culture of different worldviews.
- Remember the armor of God.
- Pray it. Practice it. Preach it.

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Discussion:

- Q. What did you find most helpful or most challenging in the video?
- Q. How do you find that you approach spiritual warfare? Do you relate to any of the worldviews of the Sadducees, Essenes or Pharisees that Pete mentioned?
- Q. How do we get the balance right between the reality of spiritual warfare and focusing on Jesus?
- Q. What are the strongholds – greed, arrogance, etc. – in your home, work or community context? How can you live in the “equal but opposite spirit” this week?

Practice as a Community:

In smaller groups, revisit the goals that you set at the beginning of the prayer course to grow in prayer and your relationship with God.

Encourage everyone to share one thing that they’ve learned and will take away from The Prayer Course into their daily lives.

Resources:

- [Toolshed](#) – an index of thirty prayer tools provided by The Prayer Course.
- [Warfare Prayer](#)