



JESUS' PRAYER

JOHN 17 · SEPTEMBER SMALL GROUP THEME

SESSION 1: JESUS TEACHES US ABOUT PRAYER

ICEBREAKER

Reflect on the difference between having a conversation with a close friend versus a stranger. Discuss what each experience is like.

BIBLE REFERENCES

Matthew 6:5-8

Matthew 14:23

Mark 1:35

Luke 3:21-22

Luke 6:12

Luke 9:18-21

Luke 10:21

Luke 22:31-32, 41-46

Luke 23:46

John 11:40-42

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

KNOWLEDGE & INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

1. What aspects mentioned in the session were frequently part of Jesus' prayers? What other aspects are included in your own prayers?
2. How does a strong knowledge of God help us in our conversations with Him?
3. Discuss the significance of the first two words of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father." Why did Christ begin His model prayer this way?

BIBLICAL QUESTIONS

1. Read Matthew 6:5-6. What makes one a hypocrite when praying? How might people do the same thing today? What did Jesus say that we should do differently?
2. Consider Matthew 6:7-8, specifically the second sentence of verse 8: *For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.* Why should we ask anything of God, including our needs, if He is omniscient and knows all things? What are some repetitious phrases you've prayed in your lifetime? It can be tempting to use the same, potentially cliché, phrases. What are some ideas that can stop your prayers from becoming stale and repetitive?

3. Walk through the phrases of the Lord's Prayer together. Discuss what each phrase teaches us about prayer.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How have you experienced that God is your Father?
2. What is a decisive moment in your life when you turned to prayer for help or for an answer? What was this experience like?
3. How can studying the prayers of Jesus help us to deepen our prayers and our relationship with God, the Father?
4. From whom have you learned to pray, as a child and even now as an adult?
5. Have you ever felt like not praying? What are some situations or attitudes that could deter someone from praying? Discuss this quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *It is precisely when a person, who is borne down by inner emptiness and weariness or a sense of personal unworthiness, feels that he would like to withdraw from [prayer], that he should learn what it means to have a duty to [pray], and the brethren should support him in his weakness, in his inability to pray.*
6. How is prayer presently a part of your day? Are there any changes you would like to make?

PERSONAL TAKE-HOME

Write down a prayer of praise, thanksgiving, intercession, or petition.

Write a version of the Lord's Prayer in your own words.

SESSION 2: JOHN 17 · JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF

ICEBREAKER

What was your last personal prayer about?

BIBLE REFERENCES

John 2:4

John 3:17

John 7:6, 30

John 10:10

John 16:33

John 17:1-5

Romans 6:23

1 John 5:11-12

KNOWLEDGE & INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think that Jesus takes time to pray for Himself?
2. What does Jesus mean when He says, "I have overcome the world?" What did He overcome? And why should we be of "good cheer" because of this?
3. The video says that it is a gift to know the one true God. How do we come to know God through our prayers?
4. As He prayed, how does Jesus glorify His Father? How was Jesus glorifying the Father through being obedient and sacrificing His life on the cross?

BIBLICAL QUESTIONS

1. How does Jesus define eternal life in John 17:2-3? Read 1 John 5:11-12. What do these verses tell us about eternal life?
2. Read John 17:1-5 together. What aspects of prayer do you recognize? What do these verses teach us about God, the Father? What do they teach us about Jesus?
3. Read Psalm 23. What do these verses teach us about God? What do they teach us about the author of the verses? What do they teach us about prayer?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How could posture affect your personal prayers?
2. Jesus makes it clear that it's okay to pray for yourself. Describe a time when you felt the Lord respond to a prayer of yours.

PERSONAL TAKE-HOME

Write down a list of things that you usually pray for yourself. Reflect on how Jesus and the author of Psalm 23 prayed for themselves. What can you learn? How can you change your prayers? Write a short prayer to God using either of the examples.

SESSION 3: JOHN 17 · JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

ICEBREAKER

How do you feel when you hear someone praying for you?

BIBLE REFERENCES

John 14:26

John 17:6-19

1 Corinthians 10:13

1 John 2:1

KNOWLEDGE & INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

1. Jesus prays for unity amongst His disciples. Why does He pray for this? How do you experience godly unity in your family? In your small group? In your congregation?
2. What does it mean for Jesus' disciples to be "not of the world"?
3. The video mentions that we should be encouraged in our prayers to express to God what we know about Him, His works, and His promises. Take some time to think about and discuss these important elements of prayer. What do you know about God? What do you know about His works? What do you know about His promises?

BIBLICAL QUESTIONS

1. Read John 17:11, 13, 15, 17. What is Jesus asking of the Father for His disciples? This week, include these petitions in your prayers to intercede for those who are working for Christ.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following sentence from the video: "Each prayer we share with God is like a testimony of our belief in Him." Discuss what is being said here. How does prayer express to God our faith and beliefs? Come up with an example of a belief statement that you could use in your own prayers.
2. Jesus clearly showed the importance of praying for others. What are some things that we can pray for when it comes to our neighbor?
3. All of us still live in this world where evil surrounds us and temptations challenge us daily. How can prayer help us to resist temptation and glorify God in all we do?
4. Why is sanctification important for us and our Christian life? How are we sanctified?

PERSONAL TAKE-HOME

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ to you? What did you learn about being a disciple from the session today? What steps could you take to better sanctify yourself?

SESSION 4: JOHN 17 · JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

ICEBREAKER

What did the Chief Apostle say about “bridging the gaps” from the Pentecost service? (For some hints, see the page on www.nac-usa.org called *Bridging the Gaps*.)

BIBLE REFERENCES

John 14:6

John 17:20-26

1 Corinthians 10:17

1 Corinthians 12:12

1 Corinthians 12:26

KNOWLEDGE & INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS

1. In John 17:20-22, Jesus expresses His desire for all believers to be unified. Why is unity so important amongst the body of Christ? What are some things that get in the way of unity?
2. In Jesus' prayer, He asks the Father, *that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved me*. What evidence does the world have that God loves you and has called you for a purpose?
3. How is it possible for people from diverse backgrounds with vastly different personalities to come together as one and work together to be effective witnesses of Jesus?
4. Together as a group, make a list about what unifies us together as believers. Then make a list of items that separate us. Does the list that brings us together outweigh the list that divides us?
5. This session mentions, “bridging the gaps.” What are concrete ways we can bridge gaps in our community and congregation?

6. Jesus says that He has given glory to His believers. How does the video define this glory? How have you experienced His glory personally?

BIBLICAL QUESTIONS

1. Read John 14:1-11. Discuss what these verses mean. How do they connect to Jesus' prayer in John 17? What do they tell us about God? How are they relevant to your life?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-26 together. What do these verses teach us about unity? What do they teach us about our dependence on one another and on God?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What is your response to the realization that Jesus has prayed for you?

2. "Through the Son, we experience the Father." What have we learned about God, the Father, from Jesus' example? What are some of His characteristics?

3. In the entirety of Jesus' prayer in John 17, what part(s) feels most relevant or applicable to you?

PERSONAL TAKE-HOME

What have you learned about prayer over the past four sessions? Write down two things that you will try to incorporate into your prayers over the next month.