

Practical Prayer Course



Session Two: What To Pray For

Part of a six week group study to help start or renew a life of prayer

find this and other resources at redeemermcr.com/prayer

Start by reading Matthew 6.9-13 together. Watch the video as a group and go over any questions.

Prayer includes asking God.

In the previous session we looked at how Jesus taught us to view ourselves: as children with a good Father. Children (rightly) ask their parents for stuff all the time! Sometimes they ask for good things, sometimes they ask for things that would harm them.

As God's children we should ask Him to work in our circumstances as well as in our hearts. If we need something, we should ask Him, regardless of how small or big or feels to us.

What are some things that you find easy to ask of God? What might be some more difficult things?

Prayer is more than just asking God.

We should ask God for things, for change, for all sorts of things, but our prayer lives should be more than merely asking God for stuff. When speaking with God, we confess our brokenness, we praise Him for His attributes, we bask in His glory.

Two things to keep in mind as we continue: God is a Person and prayer is a conversation.

God is not a heavenly jukebox, where if you insert the right coins and press a button you get some chill tunes. God is not a cosmic sugar daddy who gives us what we want if we put on a good face and behave ourselves. Because we have manipulative hearts, we can contort prayer into manipulation and empty religion, using prayer as a tick boxing exercise to be good or get what we want. God is a Person and prayer is a conversation.

Where are you most likely to contort prayer: using it to get what you want, to be a "good Christian", a box to tick before moving on with your day as planned?

Different ways to structure your prayers:

The Lord's Prayer. Jesus taught us how to pray in Matthew 6.9-13:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name
[may You be above everything else]

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
[may Your will be more important than anything else]

Give us today our daily bread.
[give us what we need for today]

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
[forgive us and enable us to forgive others]

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
[keep us on Your path]

Look up Matthew 6.9-13 and write Jesus' prayer out in your own words. Share these together as a group.

ACTS. Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Adoration is focussing on God and praising Him. Confession is realising how far we are from God and where we need to be forgiven. Thanksgiving looks back on Jesus' death and resurrection and thanks God that we are near to Him because of Jesus. It also looks back at places in our lives where God has been at work. Supplication is asking God to work in areas in our lives or others.

PRAY. Pete Grieg uses this acronym in his book, *How to Pray*: Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield. Pause is about slowing ourselves and centring our thoughts on Jesus. Rejoice is adoration and thanksgiving for who God is and what He's done. Ask is when we petition God to change us, our world, and our circumstances. Yield is a final surrender to the Lord's will above ours, as we listen and confess.

ACTS and PRAY, and no doubt there are more like these out there, they can all be helpful. They are, at the least, a good start or help. Over time though, as we grow and mature and get to know more of God and ourselves, our prayer lives won't always be as rigid as a simple formula. So use ACTS or PRAY or other examples as they are helpful. Try them on for some time, keep the good. Prayer includes technique but isn't merely a technique. Prayer is a conversation with the personal God.

Take some time to pray through one or more of these structures as a group. Are there other structures of prayer that you've found helpful in the past?



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