



# Practical Prayer Course

## Session Four: Distractions

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](http://redeemermcr.com/prayer)

Watch the video together and talk through any questions that came up.

### **Everyone has distractions in their life.**

“I have often said that the sole cause of man’s unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room.” –*Pensees*, Blaise Pascal, 17th century

Pascal wrote often about how we choose to distract ourselves, and this was in the 1600s! Even though we have more control over our lives, we still find ourselves mired in distractions. If we were truly content with who we are, things might be different.

So prayer in real life is learning to deal with our distractions. Paul in Colossians 1.9 writes that to the church that he “never stopped ceasing prayer for you.” There are other areas where Paul talks about an ongoing prayer life in this way. Assuming that Paul was at least a moderately busy man, in the midst of that, he was able to have a robust and meaningful prayer life.

Then there’s the example of Jesus. If anyone ever had a reason to be overly busy or distracted, surely it would have been Jesus. But we don’t find Him this way in the gospel writings. He is the ultimate non-anxious presence and found many times to pray to the Father

But let’s be real. Different life stages come with them different advantages and disadvantages. If you’ve had kids, how has that changed your daily rhythms of life? Your spiritual disciplines? If you were a Christian before university, how did going to uni change your spiritual life? What about when you started your first job or career? Share with the group past life stages and what that was like.

### **How distracted people can have a rich prayer life.**

There are many possibilities here, chat through some of these and try them on.

-Having an idea of what to pray for first can be helpful. In session two we looked at the Lord’s prayer, ACTS, and PRAY as models to help us pray. The Lord’s prayer is found in Matthew 6.9-13. ACTS stands for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and

supplication. Pray stands for pause, rejoice, ask, yield. Have you tried these before? How was it helpful?

-Vocalising your prayers and having them on your lips, even if just softly, can help direct our attention.

-Using your body: walking, pacing, kneeling, etc. can help with focus.

-Writing or typing your prayers can ground our prayers in specifics.

-Bringing whatever you've read in the Bible into your prayer life (although this assumes you have a regular practice of Bible reading!). The Psalms the Lord's prayer are particularly helpful here.

-Praying with others is an important part of the Christian life. It is far easier to pay attention when participating with other people. Some find praying out loud in a group stressful or might even be anxious, but joining in with other brothers and sisters is an important part of being a Christian. The reality is that you *need* others to be a part of your prayer life. And others certainly need you. To neglect this aspect of Christianity will keep us shallow in areas that aren't good for us.

-Technology that can distract can be also be used to help. Calendar reminders to pray, messaging apps, , prayer apps (like [PrayerMate](#), [Pray as you go](#), [Lectio 365](#)), Zoom, even old school phone calls can all be leveraged for our prayer life. See list below.

Have you tried any of these ways to pray in the past? How have they been helpful? What on this list might be worth giving it a go? Anything not on this list?

### **Bring your distractions into your prayer life.**

Instead of avoiding distractions, maybe God wants to work through them. Pray to Him as they come into your head: not only the thoughts, but the reality of being distracted itself. God knows how distracted you are more than you do anyway, might as well talk to Him about it.

What has been some of the most fruitful prayer times or seasons in your life (no judgment here!)? What made it fruitful? How did it affect other parts of your life, was anything surprising?

App resources:

**PrayerMate:** an app to help organise your prayer life: [prayermate.net](http://prayermate.net)

**Pray as you go:** a daily guided prayer devotional: [pray-as-you-go.org](http://pray-as-you-go.org)

**Lectio 365:** another good daily guided prayer app: [24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional](http://24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional)



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