

Sermon Discussion Guide

How To Pray Throughout Your Day 40 Days Of Prayer – Week 5

(Note – may only be reproduced for use as a participant in MCF's 40 Day of Prayer campaign)

“Pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers, asking for everything you need. To do this you must always be ready and never give up. And always pray for all God’s people.” Ephesians 6:18 (NCV)

When we read the Bible, it’s clear that the apostle Paul prayed all the time, but can we possibly pray continuously? Ephesians 6 above explains that we should pray at all times and anywhere, with all kinds of prayers whenever a thought comes to mind. We should ask for everything we need, and always be ready by having a plan for our prayers, never stopping or giving up, but praying for everyone. We should develop the habits of keeping a running conversation with God instead of talking to ourselves, and schedule times for specific kinds of prayer throughout our day. The Lord’s Prayer covers every need of our lives, so in this discussion we’ll use it as a model for *how* (and not what) to pray throughout the day.

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

“Every good gift and every perfect present comes from your Father of light in heaven...” James 1:17

1. We should get up each morning with a prayer of gratitude. Share one thing you could thank God for every morning.
2. When you feel God’s constant love for you and know he is good to you, how does it affect the frequency and the content of your prayer?

“If you seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness, all the other things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

3. If you have experienced a good opportunity that opened up in front of you, when you sought first God’s kingdom and righteousness, share it with your group.
4. In praying we should consider God’s plan for ourselves, but how clear is God’s plan for you?

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” Matthew 6:13 (NIV)

5. While you are fighting against temptation, how does prayer help you overcome it?

“...And God is faithful ... when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out...” 1 Corinthians 10:13(NIV)

6. Give an example of an encouraging prayer from the Bible.

Diving Deeper (optional)

“...for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” Matthew 6:8 (NIV)

1. Jesus told us that our Father knows what we need before we ask him. Since this is true, why do you think God wants us to pray often and about everything?

“I confessed my sins to you and didn’t try to hide them ... Then you forgave me and now all my guilt is gone!” Psalm 32:5

2. Our prayers should include asking for forgiveness and avoid carrying guilt. Can you describe a time when you carried guilt or a resentment from day to day?

“Those who know your name trust in you...” Psalm 9:10

3. Share a name of God that you have personally used in prayer.

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week's Study

- Icebreaker: Share something you are grateful for with the group.
- Goals: Help group members understand the importance of keeping a running conversation with God throughout the day. Encourage members to start with gratitude, praise his name, and seek his will above all else. Remind them to ask him for anything they need, as well as to intercede for the needs of others, and to ask for forgiveness for sins and help them forgive the sins of others. Motivate them to ask God for help making wise decisions and to end each day with his encouraging truth through scripture.
- Pray: Holy Spirit, help us to pray at all times with all kinds of prayers, not to be afraid to ask the Father for everything we need, and to bless the needs of others. Jesus, give us the strength to always be ready to come to the Father, to ask for forgiveness of our sins each day, and to forgive those who sin against us. Help us to never give up and put you first, as we remember that yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever! Amen

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God's five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We've designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as "I need to spend more time in prayer." It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately, you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.