

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE

HOW DO WE PRAY

SESSION 1 – WHY DO WE PRAY?

PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

This opening session establishes the foundation for the entire study by addressing a simple but deeply formative question: **Why do we pray?** Rather than focusing on techniques or formulas, this lesson invites participants to explore prayer as **relationship before request**.

The purpose of this session is to help participants move beyond viewing prayer as a religious task or problem-solving tool and toward understanding prayer as **ongoing connection with God**. This session sets the tone for the study by emphasizing honesty, presence, trust, and relationship.

INTENDED USE

This lesson is designed for **personal preparation and group discussion**. Participants should complete the Student Guide prior to the group gathering.

The facilitator's role is not to provide expert answers, but to:

- Create a safe and reflective space
 - Guide conversation with openness and curiosity
 - Encourage personal engagement rather than “correct” responses
 - Help participants begin the study with humility and attentiveness
-

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Reflect honestly on their current understanding of prayer
 - Recognize prayer as relational rather than transactional
 - Identify common assumptions or habits related to prayer
 - Understand why Jesus emphasized prayer as connection with the Father
 - Enter the study with openness rather than pressure to perform
-

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Before leading the session:



- Read the Scripture passage for this session slowly and prayerfully
- Reflect on your own experiences of prayer—both ease and struggle
- Consider how prayer has been framed for you in the past
- Prepare to model honesty rather than certainty
- Be ready to allow silence and unhurried discussion

This session works best when the facilitator resists over-explaining and instead **lets the group discover meaning together.**

SESSION FLOW (60–75 MINUTES)

1. WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Welcome participants and briefly introduce the focus of the study.

You may say something like:

“This study begins with a question that many of us carry quietly: Why do we pray? Today is not about doing prayer ‘better,’ but about understanding what prayer is meant to be.”

Open with a simple prayer, asking God to:

- Invite honesty rather than performance
- Create openness and trust within the group
- Help participants listen—to God and to one another

Suggested prayer focus:

- Openness and humility
 - Willingness to be honest
 - Desire for connection with God
-

2. ORIENTING THE GROUP: WHY START HERE? (5 MINUTES)

Briefly frame why this question matters.

Key points to highlight:

- Many people pray, but few stop to reflect on *why*
- Prayer is often shaped by habit, need, or crisis



- Jesus consistently modeled prayer as relationship

Emphasize that this session sets the foundation for everything that follows.

Key teaching point:

Prayer is not primarily about saying the right words—it is about **being present with God**.

3. OPENING DISCUSSION: EXPERIENCES WITH PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Invite participants into gentle reflection.

Discussion prompts:

- **When you hear the word “prayer,” what comes to mind first?**
- **What emotions do you associate with prayer—comfort, confusion, pressure, guilt?**
- **How were you taught to pray, either explicitly or implicitly?**

Facilitator guidance:

- Affirm all responses without correcting
- Avoid comparing experiences
- Encourage listening rather than fixing

This section helps surface assumptions that may otherwise remain unspoken.

4. DISCUSSION: WHY DO PEOPLE PRAY? (10 MINUTES)

Shift toward broader reflection.

Discussion prompts:

- **What usually motivates people to pray?**
- **When do people tend to pray most often?**
- **What expectations do people sometimes bring into prayer?**

Facilitator insight:

Many people approach prayer primarily as a way to get answers, relief, or change—often without considering relationship.

Help the group notice patterns without judgment.

5. DISCUSSION: PRAYER AS RELATIONSHIP (10 MINUTES)



Introduce the core theme of the session.

Key idea to name clearly:

Prayer is relationship before it is request.

Discussion prompts:

- **How does this idea challenge or affirm your current view of prayer?**
- **What changes if prayer is primarily about relationship rather than results?**
- **What might it look like to pray without an agenda?**

Encourage participants to reflect personally rather than hypothetically.

6. DISCUSSION: LEARNING FROM JESUS' EXAMPLE (10 MINUTES)

Focus attention on Jesus' practice of prayer.

Discussion prompts:

- **What stands out to you about how Jesus prayed?**
- **Why do you think Jesus prayed so often, even though He was close to God?**
- **What does Jesus' prayer life suggest about dependence and trust?**

Facilitator guidance:

Resist turning this into a checklist. Keep the focus on relationship, not imitation through effort.

7. REFLECTION: OBSTACLES TO PRAYER (5–10 MINUTES)

Invite honest self-reflection.

Reflection questions:

- **What makes prayer difficult or uncomfortable for you?**
- **What distractions or expectations interfere with prayer?**
- **Where do you feel pressure to “pray correctly”?**

Allow silence. Do not rush to fill it.

This moment often opens deeper awareness and vulnerability.

8. INVITATION: BEGINNING THE JOURNEY (5 MINUTES)



Help participants look forward.

Discussion prompts:

- **What would you like prayer to become for you?**
- **What would it mean to approach prayer with curiosity rather than pressure?**
- **What is one small posture or intention you want to carry into this study?**

Encourage gentle, realistic intentions—not dramatic commitments.

9. CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING (5 MINUTES)

Close the session by thanking God for:

- The gift of relationship
- The freedom to come honestly
- God's presence that does not depend on words

You may invite participants to sit quietly for a brief moment before closing.

Optional prayer focus:

- Trust
- Openness
- God's nearness

End with a simple spoken blessing, such as:

“May we learn to come to God not with performance, but with presence.”

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FACILITATORS

This first session is not about answering everything—it is about **opening the door**. If participants leave with fewer assumptions and greater openness, the session has succeeded.

The goal is not to define prayer perfectly, but to invite participants into a study shaped by **relationship, honesty, and trust**.

Let the tone be gentle.

Let the pace be unhurried.

Let the invitation remain open.

