

**IS ANYBODY UP THERE?  
WEEK 1 DISCUSSION GUIDE  
"HOW DO I PRAY"**

**READ**

This week we started a new series on prayer titled "Is Anybody Up There," by looking at a pattern of prayer taught by Jesus. If you struggle with prayer, you are not alone. In 1<sup>st</sup> century Israel prayer was an important part of the Jewish life, they prayed morning, afternoon and evening. Even within this context Jesus' disciples, who had plenty of experience praying, asked for help from Jesus. *"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1.*

Matthew 6:5-8

*"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."*

Prayer is not about drawing attention to yourself, it is not an elaborate production, rather it is intimate and personal. Prayer is between you and God, and there is a reward.

Matthew 6:9

*This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,"*

Hallowed means to be holy, sacred, set apart. This introduction is about entering prayer with proper alignment. In this way we recognize that He is the sovereign God of the universe and we are not.

Matthew 6:10

*...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

This is about surrender, before we go to God with our needs, we surrender to Him and seek His kingdom more than our own. Prayer is about aligning our heart to God's. As we surrender in prayer, God changes the desires of our hearts to align with His will.

Matthew 6:11-12

*Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

We bring our daily needs to God asking him for help, this reminds us of our dependence on God's provision. Asking for forgiveness, we confess our sins to God, which brings healing to our souls. Forgiveness is not just between us and God and we are to forgive others, not to expect God to do for us what we are unwilling to do for others.

*Matthew 6:13*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

We ask God to help us live differently, and that we would not continue to sin. We seek for Him to lead us, to help us live by the power of Jesus and to deliver us from evil.

In this pattern of prayer, we align ourselves to God, surrender our will to His and depend on His power. The reward we receive is peace, peace that surpasses all understanding.

*Philippians 4:6-7*

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

## **DISCUSS**

Think about someone in your life who you would consider a prayer warrior, someone who prays extensively. What do you see in their life that is different as a result of prayer?

Has there been a time in your life when God answered a prayer in an unexpected way? Share this with your group.

What do you struggle with most about prayer?

Think about a time that God changed your heart through prayer. What did this look like?

Share about a time when prayer helped you to extend forgiveness to someone in your life.

Think about a time you found peace in the midst of difficult circumstances as a result of prayer. Share this with your group.

## **PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP**

Pray that we would come along side others to pray for their needs, that we would be a source of love and encouragement to each other.

**PRAY FOR FCC**

Pray that connecting with God through prayer would be a central part of our lives. Pray that our lives would look different as a result of prayer, that we would experience the peace that surpasses understanding as we surrender to God.

**PRAY FOR OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS**

Please praise and pray for our local partners whose hearts have been called to minister to those in prison. There is a loss of hope and freedom for many serving life sentences. Pray for those partners who restore hope in Jesus through Bible studies and the gift of time. Praise Jesus for the lives He has already changed. Pray for strength in the face of adversity and hardened hearts and that more would be open to the healing power of Jesus.