

Small Group Guide: How to Pray

Key Scripture References

- James 5:13-18
 - Daniel 9:2-3
 - Deuteronomy 11:13-17
 - Luke 11:9-10
 - Acts 16:31
 - Isaiah 53:5
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Main Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Elijah was human, just like us** - His powerful prayers weren't because he was superhuman, but because he aligned himself with God's Word.
 2. **Read first, pray second** - Daniel and Elijah read Scripture to understand God's will before praying.
 3. **Declare, don't just ask** - There's a difference between pleading with God and proclaiming what He's already promised in His Word.
 4. **Three key proclamations:**
 - God wants all our children saved
 - God wants to heal our sickness and disease
 - God desires us to prosper
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Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding Prayer

1. **Pastor David mentioned that Elijah was "a human being, even as we are" (James 5:17). Why do you think God emphasized this in Scripture? How does this change your view of your own prayer life?**

2. **Have you ever experienced a season where you prayed consistently but felt like nothing was happening? What was that like? Looking back, what do you think God might have been doing during that time?**
3. **The sermon contrasted "praying for something" versus "declaring something." What's the difference? Can you think of examples of each in your own prayer life?**

Section 2: Aligning with God's Word

4. **Daniel understood from the Scriptures what to pray (Daniel 9:2). How often do you read the Bible before you pray? What might change in your prayer life if you started with Scripture first?**
5. **The pastor shared that Elijah prayed for drought because God said He would do that if the people turned to idols. Elijah was simply "bringing God to remembrance" of His own Word. How does this change the way you think about bold prayers?**
6. **Read Luke 11:9-10 together. Pastor David noted that "everyone" means everyone. What keeps us from truly believing this promise? What circumstances have made you question verses like this?**

Section 3: Three Proclamations

Proclamation 1: God wants all our children saved (Acts 16:31)

7. **The pastor shared his father's story of praying God's promise for his household. Do you have family members who aren't walking with the Lord? How might your prayers change if you shifted from pleading to proclaiming God's promise?**
8. **For those with prodigal children or loved ones: What encouragement did you receive from the story of David's own salvation after 10 years of his father's prayers?**

Proclamation 2: God wants to heal our sickness and disease (Isaiah 53:5)

- 9. Discuss the testimony of the baby born without the center of her brain. The mother put Scripture sticky notes everywhere and proclaimed God's Word. What strikes you most about this story?**

- 10. Do you believe God still does miracles today? Why or why not? What might be holding you back from believing for healing in your own life or the lives of others?**

Proclamation 3: God desires us to prosper

- 11. The pastor acknowledged this is hard for mountain culture, where poverty can be seen as a "badge of honor." What has been your teaching or understanding about God and prosperity? How does this align or conflict with what was shared?**

- 12. Read Hebrews 11:6. Do you believe God is a "rewarder"? Why is it sometimes difficult to receive from God when we don't feel we deserve it?**

Personal Reflection

Take a few minutes of silence for personal reflection:

- What is one area of your life where you need to stop "praying" and start "proclaiming" God's Word?
- What specific Scripture promise can you stand on this week?
- What sticky note Scripture do you need to put on your mirror or refrigerator?

Practical Application

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following:

1. **Daily Word Before Prayer:** For the next 7 days, read Scripture for 10 minutes before you pray. Write down one promise you discover and pray it back to God.
 2. **Proclamation Project:** Identify one major need in your life (salvation of a loved one, healing, provision, etc.). Find 3-5 Scripture promises related to that need. Write them on sticky notes or index cards and place them where you'll see them daily. Speak them aloud each day as declarations, not requests.
 3. **Prayer Partner:** Find one person in the group to partner with this week. Share your specific need and the Scripture promise you're standing on. Commit to proclaiming that promise together daily (via text, call, or in person).
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Group Prayer Time

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for family members who need salvation, specifically proclaiming Acts 16:31
- Pray for anyone in the group dealing with sickness or disease, declaring Isaiah 53:5
- Pray for those struggling financially, proclaiming God's desire to prosper His children
- Pray for boldness to shift from asking to declaring God's Word

Suggestion: Have different group members lead prayer for each focus area, encouraging them to declare Scripture rather than just make requests.

Closing Thought

"What if we spent less time asking God to do something our way and get into His Word and do it His way? What if it would change the dynamics of everything?"

Additional Resources

- Start a "Promise Journal" where you write down Scripture promises and date them as you pray

- Consider reading through the Psalms to see how David declared God's character and promises
- Memorize one key verse from today's discussion (suggest Acts 16:31, Luke 11:9-10, or Isaiah 53:5)