

## **Prayer Life in a Growth Group**

- In this session, we are going to look first at *prayer*, then at the *leader who prays*, before considering how we might be able to help lead *Growth Groups who Pray* diligently.

## **Prayer**

- We see prayer from Abraham the forefather of faith, (Gen 20:7) to Moses the leader of Israel (Ex 8:20), to the Judges (like Samson – Judges 16:28 or Samuel – 1 Sam 8:6), to the Kings (Saul – 1 Sam 14:41, David – 2 Sam 15:31), to the Prophets (Jeremiah – Jer 10:23, Daniel 6:11, Jonah 2:1).
- As we move into the New Testament, at key moments we see Jesus withdraw from the crowds in order to pray (Matt 14:23, 26:39, 42, 44; Mk 1:35, 6:46, 14:32, 35; Lk 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 28, 11:1, 22:41, 44; Jn 17:1) – to be able to talk intentionally to his Father was clearly important.

## **Exercise: Look up the following passages – what does Jesus teach us about praying?**

Matthew 6:5-15

Matthew 26:36-46

John 17:1-26 (Jesus prays. Note: the three aspects that Jesus prays – first for himself, then for his disciples, then for all believers)

### The Leader who prays

- Prayer expresses our dependence on God, our own frailty and a desire for help.

a) Our prayers should \_\_\_\_\_

E.g. 2 Samuel 7:18-29 (David's Prayer)

Matthew 6:5-15 (Beatitudes)

Colossians 1:3-14 (Paul's prayer for the Colossians)

Prayers such as these are...

b) Our prayers should be \_\_\_\_\_

E.g. 1 Timothy 2:1-7

c) Our prayers should \_\_\_\_\_

E.g. 1 Peter 5:7

Matthew 6:25-34

- Paul (c.f. Eph 6:18-20)
- James (c.f. James 5:13-16)

**Exercise: On you own, answer the following questions about things to pray – then we will pray in small groups.**

- One thing for which you would like to praise God (e.g. An attribute of his character or an aspect of what he has done or is doing)

<sup>1</sup> I will exalt you, my God the King;  
I will praise your name for ever and ever.

<sup>2</sup> Every day I will praise you  
and extol your name for ever and ever.

<sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;  
his greatness no one can fathom. (Psalm 145:1-3)

- A personal need

<sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Phil 4:6)

- Someone else for who you would like to pray (e.g. Not-yet Christian or someone in need)

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16b)

- Something in the world, local, national, or international which you would like to pray about (e.g. An area closed to the gospel, an area in the midst of war, an area of injustice, an aspect of society where you want to see change.)

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— <sup>2</sup>for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup>This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, <sup>4</sup>who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim 2:1-4)

- Appendix 1 is a Monthly Prayer Planner and Appendix 2 is a Daily Prayer Card – both just suggestions for a way to be intentional in prayer. Both available on *Church Central*.

### **Growth Groups who Pray**

**Question: Why should we pray in Growth Group?**

**Question: What barriers/difficulties have you encountered in the prayer life of a Growth Group in which you have been involved?**

*Responses:*


**Question: What has been some of your good prayer experiences in Growth Group?**

*Responses:*


**Prayer Principles** (for Growth Groups):

- **Be confident in God through Christ**
- **The example of the Leaders**
- **Pray every week (at Growth Group)**
- **Give Prayer, Priority in Group time**
- **Keep a record of the groups Prayer concerns**

**Prayer tips** (for Growth Groups):

- **Use the Prayers of the Bible or the Bible Passage**
- **Collecting Prayer Points – this can be a mixed blessing.**

- Pray wide and deep:
  
- Pray near and close:
  
- Don't feel as if you have to cover everything – every time you meet!
  
- To encourage Group prayer.
  - As leaders be sure to serve others in prayer – we are not only praying to God, but leading others in prayer (this does not mean to pray in order to impress, but to serve them)
  - Use plurals 'we' and 'our' to signal that we are all praying.
  - Say short prayers.
  - Write up the prayers (Butcher paper/White board) - then get everyone to pray 'shot-gun prayers' (quick one sentence prayers).
  - Avoid jargon or complicated expressions.
  - Use your normal voice (as opposed to some 'holy' tone!)
  - Reduce the groups size if it will make it more comfortable for others to pray. Praying in single sex groups can also be effective (not every week).
  - Formulating prayers or giving suggestions of worthy things to pray for may make it more comfortable for others to pray.

***Exercise: Pray***

Give thanks for the gospel

Pray for those we come in contact to understand the truth of Jesus

Pray for all our efforts to lead God's people

Pray for the members of your Growth Group (by name)

**Further reading/reference:**

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|--------------------------|---|
| Carson, D.,              | <i>A Call for Spiritual Reformation – Priorities from Paul and his Prayers.</i> Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1992.                |
| Keller, T.,              | <i>Prayer – Experiencing awe and intimacy with God.</i> Great Britain, Hodder & Stoughton, 2014.                                |
| Marshall, C.,            | <i>Growth Groups – A Training Course in How to Lead Small Groups.</i> Kingsford; St Matthias Press 1995, Chapter 8.             |
| Miller, P.E.,            | <i>A Praying Life – Connecting with God in a Distracting World.</i> Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2009.                           |
| Morris, R. & Morris, K., | <i>Leading Better Bible Studies – Essential skills for effective Small Groups.</i> South Sydney: Aquila Press, 1997, Chapter 5. |
| Shead, S.,               | <i>Growing in Prayer – learning to prayer with dependence and delight.</i> Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2019.                     |

**Leaders Training: 1D (Adult Ministry Stream)**  
**Prayer Life in a Growth Group**

**Appendix 1 – Monthly Prayer Planner**

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
<b>Praise</b>	Jesus Christ	Those who brought me to faith	Creation	My Sufferings	The Atonement	His Provision	The Disciples
<b>My Family</b>						Compassion Kids	
<b>My Ministry</b>	The way I serve at church		LMAP Musos	My Church		Missionaries: Sandifers	My Enemies (or those I find difficult)
<b>Other</b>		Pray the Lord's Prayer	Anglicare		Those who live on the streets		Work Place Mission Fields
	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th
<b>Praise</b>	Freedom of Religion	Heaven	My Jobs	My Sanctification	My Holidays	His Love	My Education and Training
<b>My Family</b>							
<b>My Ministry</b>		My Work Colleagues				My Uni/TAFE/School Mates	
<b>Other</b>	LMAP Admin Team		To raise up workers for the harvest	For those I know who are depressed	The Audio/Visual Ministry team		Ministry Team
	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st
<b>Praise</b>	Jesus Christ	His Sovereignty	His Church	My Life	His Judgement and Grace	His Promises	My Eternity
<b>My Family</b>							
<b>My Ministry</b>			Other LMAP Gatherings/Locations		My Growth Group		Missionaries: Haddons
<b>Other</b>	Persecuted Christians around the world	BCA		Pray a Confession of Sin		The Schools near where I live (and SRE)	Those I know who are sick
	22nd	23rd	24th	25th	26th	27th	28th
<b>Praise</b>	God the Father	For preaching of the Gospel	The Bible	My Ministry	For forgiveness of Sin	The gift of the Holy Spirit	Persecution
<b>My Family</b>							
<b>My Ministry</b>	My Neighbours	Missionaries: Bijaya & Kate	Growth Group Leader/s		Missionaries: Judith Calf	The people I will meet at Church	Newcomers at Church
<b>Other</b>		The Churches near where I live		Pray the Lord's Prayer	Moore College		LMAP Musicians
	29th	30th	31st	OTHERS			
<b>Praise</b>	Jesus Christ	The Resurrection	God the Father				
<b>My Family</b>							
<b>My Ministry</b>	My Friends who don't know Christ	My Giving					
<b>Other</b>	The Archbishop and Bishop		Nepean Hospital				

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**Appendix 2 – Daily Prayer Card**

Dear Lord and Father,

Thank you for your love and acceptance of me and for the identity and security you have given me in Jesus Christ.

*Personal*

- Speak to me through your Word today.
- Help me to make every effort to pursue holiness - safe in the knowledge that you forgive in Jesus and it is in him that I place my hope.
- By your Spirit, renew my inner nature day in and out.
- Strengthen me so that I don't morally fail and help me to trust you when I feel weak or burdened - and to repent when I fail.
- Alert me to the sins that I am unaware of and help me change accordingly.
- Shape me in Christlikeness and rid me of my selfishness.
- Help me to pour out my heart to you when I am distressed, stressed, disappointed, hurt, tired, lonely or depressed.
- Help me to be quick to accept and act upon legitimate correction or criticism and resilient in not taking action on unjustified correction or criticism and the wisdom to know the difference.

*Family*

- Help me to be a loving, faithful, considerate husband to N.
- Help me to be a wise, generous, patient father to J, E, A and T.
- Grow N and the kids in faith and help them to trust you when they struggle, are burdened or are unsure. Help me to lead them in a Christlike way.
- Heal and care for the medical issues that my family has to trust you with and help me to be wise in the choices we make concerning their medical care.
- Nurture our god-kids so they might grow up in their salvation – M, S, A, K, J, A, E, J, N, J, T, J, E.
- Save my Father and my Sisters and grow in faith my Grandmother, Mother and Sister (and respective partners/children).

*Ministry*

- Please give me gifts of leadership, evangelism, teaching, discipleship and preaching and the opportunity to use them.
- Help me to exercise the gifts that you have given me in a wise and humble way – even when I feel disheartened.
- Help me to deal with frustrations in a gracious, humble and careful way – keeping a close reign on my tongue and my attitude.
- Help me to be patient when others need it, and not just when I feel like it.
- Help me to stop comparing myself with others, either feeling jealous or superior.
- Help me to speak truth always – and to speak with care, wisdom, restraint and love.
- Guide me to know when it is right to speak up or challenge and when doing so to be helpful and thoughtful in how I express myself.

*LMAP*

- Help me to lead the way in mission and ministry – keeping the main thing the main thing, and the main thing is Jesus.
- Help me to love, serve, lead, mentor and disciple those in my care – in both formal and informal ways. Help me to know how to correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.
- Help me to guide, direct, listen, trust and submit to the ministry team, parish council and trainees.
- Help me to care for, develop, challenge and encourage the core leaders of the LMAP Gatherings.
- Help me to say 'No' to requests or ministry that will be unhelpful either to others or me – and not to feel guilty.
- Give me the energy, time, health and attitude that I need to serve you and your people at LMAP as you want.
- Help me not to make mistakes and when I do to learn from them knowing that you work for the good of all those who love you.

*Friendships*

- Help me to be a good friend especially to those who are core friends. Help me not to be too dependent on them and be satisfied with your love and acceptance.

Father, today, I offer myself to you, to serve you and honour you. Amen.