



Session 1: Be yourself

1-6 SEP

ICEBREAKER

What would you liken to your prayer life? eg marathon runner – slow but steady; rocket – soaring to the heavens; new moon – once a month; shooting star – blink and you miss it; *Titanic* – sunk without trace etc.

KEY THOUGHT

Our prayer life is a major factor in our spiritual maturity and effectiveness as a Christian. We should therefore seek to ensure it is both enjoyable and vibrant.

KEY VERSE

'Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.' Luke 18:1

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What motivates *you* to pray?
2. Why is the language of prayer easy to learn?
3. How can we be free from guilt about our prayer life?
4. What can we learn from the prayers of others without copying them?
5. How would you explain God's acceptance in 30 seconds?
6. How is your relationship with the British Prime Minister similar to and different from his relationship with his daughter, Florence Rose Endellion?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.' Luke 5:16

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray that the Lord will open your mind to understand more about prayer.
- Pray that the Lord will touch your heart to release blockages to prayer.

Session 2: Conversing with God

7-12 SEP

ICEBREAKER

If you could ask God a question what would it be?

KEY THOUGHT

Prayer is first and foremost a conversation with God based on the intimacy of a real friendship.

KEY VERSE

'The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.' Exodus 33:11

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. 'Innit' appropriate to speak to God in the style of a 'rapper'?
2. Compose a definition of the word 'friend'.
3. Discuss the quote of François Fénelon.
4. How can we avoid the blight of formalism?
5. What are the benefits and disadvantages of liturgical prayers?
6. How may hypocrisy, meaningless repetition and resentment block prayers?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me."' John 11:41

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask God the question you thought of in the Icebreaker.
- Pray from your *emotions* about a situation that troubles you.



Session 3: First focus: reverential worship

13–20 SEP

ICEBREAKER

Which are your favourite hymns and choruses?

KEY THOUGHT

The first building block of a healthy prayer life is to approach God in an attitude of reverential worship.

KEY VERSE

'... let us ... worship God acceptably with reverence and awe ...' Hebrews 12:28

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Do you have a pattern of prayer in your own times with the Lord, and how may it help?
2. Discuss the quote of Arthur W. Pink.
3. List the characteristics of God that His name represents.
4. What part does music play in worship?
5. How can we avoid materialism and individualism in our prayers?
6. Is it valid to ask God to 'bless me and enlarge my territory'?
7. How can we maintain the correct balance between worship and works?
8. How can we ensure worship does not become heartless ritual?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth ...' Matthew 11:25

PRAYER POINTERS

- Consider and exalt God for each of His attributes.
- Ask God to keep the fire of love burning on the altar of your heart.

Session 4: Adoration

21–27 SEP

ICEBREAKER

What non-moving image do you enjoy gazing at? eg landscape, seascape, nature, stars, art (but not the TV or sport!).

KEY THOUGHT

One little-practised form of prayer is adoration, which is the silent contemplation of God that takes place deep in the soul and has enormous spiritual benefits.

KEY VERSES

'Let be *and* be still, and know (recognize and understand) that I am God.'

Psalm 46:10 (*The Amplified Bible*)

'And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His *very own* image in ever increasing splendor *and* from one degree of glory to another ...'

2 Corinthians 3:18 (*The Amplified Bible*)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Discuss the spiritual attitude of Pierre Chaffangeon.
2. Compare and contrast gazing on God to gazing at a sunset.
3. How could you build periods of stillness into your busy schedule?
4. Compare and contrast glancing at Jesus to gazing on Him. (See John 20:15–18.)

5. Compose definitions of the words 'worship' and 'adoration'.
6. Why may adoration of God help us overcome temptation and sin?
7. Do you have the right balance of being contemplative and active?

THE EXAMPLE OF DAVID

'One thing I have asked of the Lord, that will I seek ... that I may dwell in the house of the Lord ... all the days of my life, to behold *and* gaze upon the beauty ... of the Lord and to meditate, consider, and inquire in His temple.'

Psalm 27:4 (*The Amplified Bible*)

PRAYER POINTERS

- Contemplate God's beauty.
- Contemplate the words of the hymn 'When I survey the wondrous cross'.



Session 5: The attitude of gratitude

28 SEP – 4 OCT

ICEBREAKERS

In a modern world should children still be expected to write a 'thank you' for birthday and Christmas presents?

Should we tip people such as waiters, taxi drivers and hairdressers for simply performing their duty?

KEY THOUGHT

Every Christian should look at life with an attitude of gratitude and not simply take things for granted.

KEY VERSE

'... always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Ephesians 5:20

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How would you cope without a car, computer or mobile? Do people in developed countries take their blessings for granted?
2. For what can you give thanks?
3. In which five new ways have you been blessed?
4. What would your life be without Jesus?
5. Discuss the quote of William Law.

6. Do you have a testimony of God turning a difficulty to good?
7. Is our tendency to give thanks influenced by our personality? eg optimist, pessimist, introvert, extrovert.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me."' John 11:41

PRAYER POINTERS

- Give thanks for the Father planning your salvation, Jesus dying for it and the Holy Spirit for sealing it.
- Give thanks for God's blessings in your life.

Session 6: Petition

5-12 OCT

ICEBREAKER

Play the game 20 Questions, where one person assumes the identity of a Bible character which the group have to identify by asking for information a maximum of 20 times. Answers can only be 'yes' or 'no'.

KEY THOUGHT

Jesus encouraged us to ask the Father for things and therefore personal petition is a valid and vital aspect of prayer.

KEY VERSE

'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.' Matthew 7:7

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why should we not view personal petition as a sign of selfish immaturity?
2. Would a lack of personal petition in our prayers indicate a sinful tendency to proud independence?
3. How has God guided you through prayer?
4. Why are we often reluctant to pray?
5. Contrast crisis prayers and common prayers.
6. Should we use written or mental lists for prayer in the same way we use lists for shopping?
7. Why is Christ's name powerful but not magical?

8. Give examples of when prayer passes into affirmation.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'He ... knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me ..."' Luke 22:41-42
'... Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"' John 11:43

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask God for answers to some of your personal needs and situations.
- Affirm that God is filling you with His love and making you more like Christ.



Session 7: Listening to God

13–19 OCT

ICEBREAKERS

Play a series of sounds for people to identify, eg birdsong, whale song, lawnmower, scooter, microwave etc.

Practise listening by trying to repeat a series of random numbers or words spoken by a group member.

KEY THOUGHT

Listening to God through Scripture and an inner voice is an oft neglected but important aspect of prayer.

KEY VERSE

'I will listen to what God the LORD will say ...'
Psalm 85:8

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Share an example of when you have felt God speak to you.
2. Compare and contrast the Bible with the work of a great author such as Shakespeare.
3. Read a short psalm out loud and then share how God has spoken to you.
4. What is your position about God speaking to us other than by Scripture?
5. How can we distinguish between the imagination and the voice of the Spirit?

6. How may your own level of expectation affect your ability to hear God's voice?
7. How can we be confident that it is God who is speaking to us?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me ... to preach ..."'
Luke 4:16–18

PRAYER POINTERS

- Repeat the psalmist's prayer, 'Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law' (Psa. 119:18).
- Repeat Samuel's prayer, 'Speak, for your servant is listening', and then wait in silence for God to speak to you.

Session 8: Intercession

20–25 OCT

ICEBREAKERS

For the younger more energetic readers with enough room, play 'It', where a nominated person tries to touch or throw a sponge ball at someone else, but an 'intercessor' stands between them as a shield to prevent contact. Watch a video clip of revivals from You Tube or by using Google (try 'Rees Howells').

KEY THOUGHT

Intercession is the giving of ourselves in fervent, believing and unhurried prayer to God for the needs of others. We are 'in the middle' between them and God to seek His forgiveness and blessing.

KEY VERSE

'... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.' 2 Chronicles 7:14

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What may motivate us to be an intercessor?
2. Could you devote more time to prayer in order to become an intercessor?
3. Should life fit around a prayer time or a prayer time fit around life?

4. Try to discover more about Evan Roberts and the 1904 Welsh Revival.
5. Try to discover more about Rees Howells and his ministry of intercession.
6. Do you have a burden of prayer for specific people or countries?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.'
Hebrews 7:25

PRAYER POINTERS

- Choose a person, group or nation and intercede for them.
- Ask God to help you discipline your time and show you situations requiring intercession.



Session 9: Confession

26–31 OCT

ICEBREAKER

Can you 'confess' a naughty (but not nasty) or embarrassing story from your childhood?

KEY THOUGHT

We should be ready and willing to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and voluntarily confess any known sin.

KEY VERSE

'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:8–9

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why may confession be a sign of strength and not weakness?
2. How can we learn to resist the temptation to excuse sin?
3. How can Christians convey the concept of sin in modern culture?
4. Is a murderer as guilty of sin as one who only shows favouritism? (See James 2:9–10.)
5. Should we have an annual spiritual appraisal or MOT? Could Lent be such an occasion?
6. How will your own approach to prayer change as a result of these studies?

THE EXAMPLE OF HEROES OF THE FAITH

David: 'Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."' 2 Samuel 12:13

Paul: '... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst.' 1 Timothy 1:15

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask the Holy Spirit to search you and confess any known sin.
- Pray that your prayer times will be deeper, more effective and filled with an awareness of God's presence.