

# Effective Prayer Strategies

Have people in your group ever felt intimidated to pray out loud? Afraid they won't sound spiritual enough? Maybe they have struggled to not let their minds wander? Do they get restless when one person prays on and on and on?

Praying in small groups has a reputation for being challenging. But it was designed to be a powerful, intimate experience. Use these strategies to help your group grow closer in prayer.

## 1. Talk to God, not the people in the room.

Challenge your group to block out others and imagine talking just to God. Often we use prayer to tell people in the group what is going on, hoping God is listening in. When we focus on talking just to Him, we are less concerned with how we sound to others.

## 2. Pray short prayers

We don't need to remind God about the details of our situation. And we don't need flowery dialogue to pray. Simply ask for what you need. "Father, help me deal with \_\_\_\_\_." "Give me wisdom to know how to handle \_\_\_\_\_." "Please heal \_\_\_\_\_." Praying short prayers eliminates the pressure to sound spiritual and helps those that are intimidated to speak up.

## 3. Pray one topic at a time.

After one person prays a short prayer, pause and see if anyone else has a short prayer *that is on the same topic*. Allow as many people who want to pray on that topic speak and then naturally move to a different topic. Here is an example of four different people praying:

"Father, please help Jane to forgive John."

"Yes, God, give her the courage to lay down her hurt and give it to You."

"Give Jane eyes to see how YOU see John. Give her love for him."

"Please heal the pain in Jane's heart and help her move on."

This tip is the greatest way to build a powerful experience within your group. The Holy Spirit will guide your group to cover one topic in many different ways. Group members are encouraged as they listen to multiple people pray for their issue. And the topics will naturally flow from one to another.

## 4. Agree in your heart with others who are praying out loud.

Listening to others pray, and silently agreeing with them, keeps your mind from wandering and helps you stay engaged and participate.

Most likely this will be a new format for your group. Be intentional to explain it and encourage everyone to participate. As leaders, it is key that you model this type of prayer for them. It may feel stilted or strange at first but stick with it! You will need to remind the group regularly at first with all four strategies. They may be simple, but easily forgotten. Don't be afraid to gently remind the group, right before you start, to pray short prayers and try to focus on one topic at a time. It *will* become natural and very fruitful for your group.