



Charles Hodge was once asked if he believed in the power of prayer. “No,” said Hodge, “I believe in the power of God; therefore, I pray. The early church believed in the goodness, majesty, and power of God; so they prayed.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Ice-Breaker questions:

(1) How is leader a prayer in church a difficult thing to do?

(2) What does it mean to pray “on behalf of” others, or to lead a prayer confessing for a group?

(3) How are we intercessors on behalf of the world?

PRAYER IN LUKE’S GOSPEL. “Prayer” or “Give thanks” appears nearly 30 times in Luke’s gospel. For Luke, prayer is rooted in the life of Jesus Christ. Use a concordance (like biblegateway.com) to examine the places where “pray” appears.

- You will notice Jesus prays at all the significant moments of life (3:21; 6:12; 9:29; 22:17; 22:39-46; 23:34). Do we pray at all the significant moments of our lives? Why or why not? Discuss.
- You will notice that prayer was a normal habit in the life of Jesus (Lk 4:42-43; 5:16). Is prayer a normal habit in our lives? Why or why not?

PRAYER IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. The early disciples were “devoted” to prayer (1:14; 2:42; 6:4). But keep reading and you will notice:

- Disciples pray at all the significant moments of life (1:24; 6:6; 8:15; 13:3; 14:23) and in times of persecution.
- Prayer was a normal habit in the lives of the disciples (10:9; 20:36; 21:5).

WHY WE PRAY. Read Galatians 4:6.

Prayer is God’s work in us. Rowan Williams says “Let Jesus’ prayer happen in you!” If we can cry “Abba, Father” through Christ, by the power of the Spirit, what is impossible?

Follow up: Read Matthew 5:1-12. Prayer is God’s work in behalf of the world. We are intercessors, calling for justice, mercy, and peace. Prayer is a cry for the life of Jesus to come alive in our lives. **Follow up: Read Luke 11:1-4.** Prayer is our “I Do” as we profess our faithfulness to God, and confess we believe God is faithful to us. Discuss.

HOW WE PRAY. Read Nehemiah 9.

Prayers often follow this outline:

***Adoration.** We fill our imagination with the glory of God.

***Confession.** We acknowledge our complicit participation in evil.

***Thanksgiving.** We see the world anew as all things are to be received with grace.

***Supplication.** We cry out to the God who wants to hear and respond to our needs.

***Doxology.** We proclaim the union of love that is Father, Son, and Spirit.