

Lenten Small Group

Session TWO • Prayer and Connection • 60-90 Minutes

1. Welcome and Fellowship (10 minutes)

- Begin with a warm welcome and casual conversation.
- If applicable, share snacks or refreshments.
- Briefly check in with members about their week and Lenten practices.

2. Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

- Lead a prayer inviting God's presence and guidance for the discussion.
- Include a moment of silence to center hearts and minds on Christ.

3. Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

- Read Matthew 6:5-15.
- Read the passage aloud (Use multiple readers for engagement).

4. Group Discussion (30-60 minutes)

- Instructions: Have a group discussions on 3-4 of the following questions. The bolded questions are great starters. If time permits check out the DEEPER DIVE questions at the end of the list.
 - What stands out to you about the way Jesus teaches us to pray?
 - What does it mean for us to pray "Our Father in heaven" instead of just "my Father"? How does this shape our understanding of community?
 - **Jesus talks about avoiding praying for show. What does sincere prayer look like to you?**
 - Have you ever felt like you were "praying for show" or just going through the motions? How can we guard against this in our own lives?
 - In what ways do you experience a deep connection with God when you pray?
 - **How might your prayer life change this Lent if you focus on connecting with God, rather than just asking for things?**
 - What role does silence, stillness, or solitude play in your prayer life? How does that help you connect more deeply with God?



- Which part of the Lord's Prayer (e.g., "Hallowed be Your name," "Give us this day our daily bread," "Forgive us our trespasses") speaks most to you right now? Why?
- How does the Lord's Prayer balance personal needs (forgiveness, daily bread) with spiritual priorities (God's will, God's kingdom)?
- Jesus connects forgiveness with prayer, saying that if we forgive others, God will forgive us. Why do you think forgiveness is so important in prayer?
- Is there someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from in order to experience a deeper connection with God?
- How can you incorporate more genuine, heartfelt prayer into your daily routine?

Deeper Dive Questions

- How do you connect with God in prayer during Lent?
- What distractions make it difficult to spend time in prayer, and how can you overcome them?
- Is there a specific way you feel led to pray for others during this season?

5. Reflection and Response (5-10 minutes)

Each person pick one question and share

- What about today's discussion brings you hope?
- Share a "high and/or low" point from the week.
- Where did you see Jesus this week?

6. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

- Pray over any specific intentions or challenges shared by group members.
- Offer gratitude for the discussion and guidance as the group continues their Lenten journey.
- Conclude with a communal prayer like the Lord's Prayer.

7. Announcements and Sending (5 minutes)

- Share any upcoming events, readings, or service opportunities for Lent.
- Encourage members to check in with each other during the week and utilize their Lenten Journals.

Teaching About Prayer.

Matthew 6:5-15

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

The Lord’s Prayer. “This is how you are to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one.

If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

Small Group Guidelines & Expectations

To ensure a respectful, meaningful, and Christ-centered small group experience, it's helpful to establish clear expectations. Here are some suggested rules:

1. Respect Confidentiality

- What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- Avoid gossip or sharing others' personal stories outside the group.

2. Listen Actively

- Give full attention when someone is speaking.
- Avoid interrupting or side conversations.

3. Participate, But Don't Dominate

- Everyone should have an opportunity to share.
- Be mindful of how much you're speaking and allow space for others.

4. Stay on Topic

- Keep the discussion focused on the scripture, lesson, or theme.
- If a conversation drifts too far, the leader should gently refocus.

5. Be Honest and Open

- Share authentically but within your comfort level.
- Encourage each other without judgment.

6. No Fixing, Preaching, or Debating

- Offer encouragement rather than trying to "fix" someone's struggles.
- Avoid theological debates that could become divisive.

7. Be Punctual and Committed

- Arrive on time and be consistent in attending.
- If you can't make it, let the leader or group know in advance.

8. Respect Differences

- Everyone is on their own spiritual journey.
- Show kindness and understanding even when opinions differ.

9. Be Prayerful

- Pray for each other throughout the week.
- Approach discussions with a spirit of humility and openness to God.