

RHYTHM - WEEK 2

Prayer

Icebreaker

If you could have one person who always picked up the phone when you called, who would you choose and why?

After a few people share, transition with: Prayer is an invitation to talk with a Father who is always available to us.

Overview

Read **Matthew 6:7-13**. Jesus warns His followers not to treat prayer like a formula where more words produce better results. The Lord's Prayer is not simply a prayer to repeat. **It is a model for prayer.** Jesus gives us a pattern that reorders our attention before it presents our requests.

This week, we will use that pattern to explore four movements of prayer: **Start With Who, Not What; Align Your Agenda with God's Agenda; Ask God for What You Need Today; and Don't Give Up.**

1. Start With Who, Not What

Read Matthew 6:9 and Acts 4:23-31

Jesus begins, "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy." When the early church prayed under pressure, they also began by reminding themselves who God was: Sovereign Lord and Creator.

LOOK AT IT

- How does Jesus describe God at the beginning of His model prayer?
- In Acts 4, what truths about God do the believers name before they make their request?
- What circumstances were the believers facing when they prayed?

EXPLORE IT

- Why do you think Jesus teaches us to begin prayer with who God is instead of what we need?
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- How can remembering God's character change the way we see a problem before the problem itself changes?
- Which truth about God do you most need to remember in your current circumstances?

GO DO IT

- Before asking God for anything this week, what is one truth about Him you can intentionally name?
- Finish this sentence: “**God, before I tell You what I need, I want to remember that You are _____.**”
- How might starting with God's character change the tone of your prayers?

2. Align Your Agenda with God's Agenda

Read Matthew 6:10

“May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

LOOK AT IT

- What two things does Jesus teach us to ask for in this verse?
- Whose kingdom and whose will are at the center of this prayer?

EXPLORE IT

- What is the difference between asking God to support our plans and asking God to align us with His plans?
- Why can “Your will be done” be difficult to pray honestly?
- How can prayer change us even before it changes our circumstances?

GO DO IT

- Is there an area where you have mostly been asking God to give you your preferred outcome?
- What would surrender sound like if you prayed about that situation tonight?
- Where could you ask, “**God, what do You want?**” before asking, “**God, give me what I want?**”

3. Ask God for What You Need Today

Read Matthew 6:11 and Exodus 16:14-21

Jesus teaches us to ask, “Give us today our daily bread.” In the wilderness, God provided manna for Israel one day at a time. His provision invited them to trust Him again tomorrow.

LOOK AT IT

- What does Jesus tell us to ask God to provide?
- In Exodus 16, what did God provide for the Israelites?
- What instructions did God give them about gathering what they needed?

EXPLORE IT

- Why do you think Jesus teaches us to pray for **daily** bread rather than everything we might need for the future?
- What is the difference between planning responsibly and trying to control tomorrow?
- How can daily dependence on God deepen our relationship with Him?

GO DO IT

- What do you actually need from God **today**?
- Is there a future concern you are carrying today that God has not asked you to solve yet?
- Turn your need into a simple prayer: “**Father, today I need You to provide** _____.”

4. Don't Give Up

Read Matthew 7:7-11 and James 4:2

Jesus tells His followers to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking. James gives an equally simple reminder: sometimes we do not have because we have not asked God.

LOOK AT IT

- What three actions does Jesus repeat in Matthew 7?
 - What promises accompany asking, seeking, and knocking?
 - According to James 4:2, what is one reason we sometimes do not receive what we desire?
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EXPLORE IT

- What does persistence in prayer reveal about our relationship with God?
- Why are we tempted to stop praying when an answer takes longer than we hoped?
- How can we keep praying without assuming that persistence means God must eventually give us exactly what we want?

GO DO IT

- Is there something you stopped praying about because you became discouraged?
- What would it look like to begin asking, seeking, or knocking again?
- Who could pray with you and help you remain persistent?

Now What?

Prayer does not have to be complicated. Use Jesus' model to build a simple rhythm this week.

WHO: Begin by naming who God is.

God, You are _____

ALIGN: Surrender your agenda.

God, help me want what You want in _____

ASK: Tell God what you need today.

Father, today I need _____

KEEP GOING: Name something you will continue bringing to God.

I will keep praying about _____

Do not worry about praying for a certain amount of time. Start the conversation and keep coming back.

Group Prayer

Take 2-3 minutes and pray. No one should feel pressured to pray out loud. Those who are comfortable can use this simple pattern:

Father, You are...

Your will...

Today, I need...

Help me keep trusting You with...

On Your Own

Each day this week, read one passage and practice one movement of prayer. Keep it simple. Read, pause, and talk with God.

- **Day One - Matthew 6:7-13:** Use Jesus' model to guide your prayer.
- **Day Two - Acts 4:23-31:** Begin by reminding yourself who God is.
- **Day Three - Exodus 16:13-21:** Ask God for what you need today.
- **Day Four - Matthew 7:7-11:** Keep asking, seeking, and knocking.
- **Day Five - Psalm 145:8-19:** Praise God for His character and bring your needs to Him.

Start with who God is. Align your heart. Ask for today. Don't give up.
