

Small Groups

SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE

Sermon on the Mount – Week 13 – *The Power of Prayer*

February 5, 2023

DIGGING IN:

1. "We long to be good at prayer. We rarely feel good at prayer." Do you identify with one or both parts of this quote? How do you feel about where you are when it comes to prayer?
2. What obstacle(s) tend to get in the way of your participation in prayer?

MAKING IT REAL:

3. Read Matthew 6:5-8.

The word "Hypocrite" in Greek culture meant an actor or stage player. So when Jesus says, "Don't be like the hypocrites," he is literally saying "Don't be an actor."

4. Why do you think we need this admonition from Jesus? In what ways do we sometimes feel that we need to be an "actor" when it comes to praying with others?
5. "Prayer is not a ritual to perform, it is a relationship to pursue." What has been your experience with conversation with God? Do you tend to do it more as a ritual or as a conversation with a friend? (Or somewhere in between?).
6. What thoughts or emotions might tend to get in the way of you considering prayer as a relationship – a conversation with a loving Person who is close to you?
7. Does shame hamper your pursuit of relationship with God? Do you come to the Father with the feeling of a glob of unworthiness? Feel like you are the audience of your own prayers because you're constantly wondering if you're doing it right or saying the right things in the right way? Write down any ways you think shame might be in the way of your relationship with God, and then pray silently and ask Him to release you from that shame. Imagine Him nailing your shame to the cross.

(cont next page)

8. Play "Friend of God" on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3q3R3pbEB8>) or Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/track/2p5ucCYPAPUjnADyZlOT58?si=1a8627130f604c35>) The song itself is partially a prayer. Close your eyes as you listen, and join in praying and in marveling that God has called you his friend.

PRAYER IDEAS

- 1) Pray for one another around the circle (each praying for the person on your right), that God will draw each one into deeper relationship with Him and that their conversation with God will become that of a true friend, that they will move more and more away from performance/rituation and toward authentic relationship with God. (If you want, each person could share one prayer request about their prayer life that could be included in the prayer. Also, instead of going around the circle, you could break into pairs or 3's to pray this for one another).
- 2) South is engaging in 24-7 prayer during Lent! You can sign up your group for a slot at www.southfellowship.org/247prayer. Your group can all join to pray at the same time, whether together or on their own at home. For more info and to see when the South Worship Center will be open for prayer, go to <https://southfellowship.churchcenter.com/calendar/event/148495436>.

WANT TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER?

(Extra Bible study ideas)

Want to understand more of what the Bible teaches about prayer? Go to www.biblegateway.com and search on "prayer" or "pray." In the right column, choose "New Testament" to simplify the list. Then you can read through the scriptures that come up and write down what you learn about the conversation with God that we are invited into!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Red Couch Theology Podcast

If you or group members have questions around parts of the sermon that are not included in the discussion guide, it's always helpful to listen to *Red Couch Theology*, where Alex and Aaron talk about the sermon and answer questions that come in from people in the congregation. <https://guysdrinkingtea.podbean.com/>

You can download the *Inner Room* app on Apple <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/inner-room/id1437144946> or Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.innerroomapp> to help you along your journey of talking with God.