



praying

This discussion guide includes preparation BEFORE the group and some guidance DURING the group meeting. Preparation before the group will help you, your leader, and your group to engage and respond to the living and active Word of God.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE GROUP MEETS:

The aim of this preparation is to encourage good & prayerful observation of the text of God's word and the joyful experience of discovering its truth.

Pray & read 2 Chronicles 7.11-16; Matthew 6.5-15

What stands out to you from these readings?

Does anything puzzle you about these readings?

How do these readings make you **feel**?

What do you **think** in response to these readings?

What will you **do** in response to these readings?

a taste of theology pre-reading: In *Prayer and the voice of God – Listening to God's living word will transform the way you pray.* [Matthias Media, 2006, p27], Phillip Jensen and Tony Payne contrast praying to God to the dehumanizing practice of praying to idols saying, "praying to the real God—the personal, speaking, listening God—makes us fully human. We speak to him as persons, and he hears and listens to us as our personal creator. If this is what the God we pray to is like, we can see more clearly why Christian prayer can be very simply defined as 'asking God for things'. For if the God we pray to is a powerful creator, and generous fatherly provider, and if he is a speaking and listening God who makes creatures in his image to communicate with him, then our prayers will take the form of speech, and we will look to our creator and ask him to act in his world."

WHEN THE GROUP MEETS: Pray for your discussion time

our **praying** core value

We delight in **praying** to God our Father expressing our dependence on his gracious sovereignty. We find great joy in approaching God our Father with confidence through Jesus by the Spirit in adoration, confession, thanksgiving and request.

▸ Do you think/feel this core value reflects what really matters to you as an individual and as a member of this church? Why/why not?

1. the personal, gracious sovereign who hears | read Psalm 107; 2 Chron 7.11-16

▸ What do you learn about God from these readings? Discuss the relational nature of prayer:

2. humble dependence on God's gracious sovereignty | read Luke 22.39-46

▸ Do the disciples pray that they will not fall into temptation? What does this say about their humble dependence? (nb Luke 22.31-34)

▸ What temptation does Jesus pray he will not fall into? What does this say about the relationship between the Father and the Son?

3. growing as pray-ers | In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul finishes with these words: *Therefore, my dear brothers & sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.* **Praying** is a core value because by prayer we humbly submit to the work **of the Lord** and dependently labour **in the Lord**.

▸ read Matthew 6.5-8 | What do these verses teach us that praying is not?

▸ read Matthew 6.9-15 | What do these verses teach us that praying is? Is there a danger (irony!) in overplaying the words of this prayer by way of a model or formula for prayer (compare with Luke 11.1-4)?

PRAY!

