



Not For Long

PRAYERS OF JESUS

GROUP GUIDE
APRIL 2022

Not For Long

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Pray then like this..
 - Jesus, Matthew 6:9 (ESV)

Prayer is more than an obligation of the Christian life. It is a sacred privilege. Prayer connects us with our Creator, who can make a real difference in our inner and outer lives. When we embrace prayer and encounter God through it, our identity can be transformed. This further moves us to call on Him, know His power, and feel His reassurance. When faced with the ups and downs of life, prayer is the promise of a God who is real, near and able. So, especially in times of suffering, tragedy, and even death, prayer allows us to lean in and hear God say “not for long.”

In this group guide, we will be looking at how we can round out our prayer lives by using the acronym ACTS:

- A - Adoration
- C - Confession
- T - Thanksgiving
- S - Supplication

The collection of prayers found in the book of Psalms will act as our source for seeing each of these types of prayer in action.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Ground Rules

Here are some guidelines for your gatherings.

- **Grow real relationships.** One of the central purposes of CCW groups is to help in the growth of real relationships. These relationships are formed through common mission, application of God's Word, authentic conversation, and time together. Don't get overly focused on one area to the detriment of the others!
- **Confidentiality.** For authenticity to thrive, what is shared during group time should be kept confidential.
- **Start on time - and end on time.** We want to respect the time of everyone involved. For that reason, our group will start on time and end on time.
- **Be a part of the discussion.** If you want to grow, get involved in the discussion. Your perspective is valuable!
- **Be real.** Authenticity and transparency are two keys to authentic life change. We ask that those participating in our group are real with who they are and their walk with God.
- **It's alright to disagree.** We're not always going to see eye-to-eye in all situations. That's alright! God created us uniquely and so we all bring different opinions, experiences and perspectives to the conversation.
- **Love, love, love.** Even if we disagree, we do so in love. Love is the binding force in all Christ-centered relationships, so we will not let our differences divide us.
- **Minimize distractions.** We recognize that emergencies may arise, but we will do our best to minimize what distractions we are able to (yeah, we're talking about cell phones here - put them away!).

Leader Guidelines

Thank you for taking the time to invest in others by leading a group. As a leader, your task is to create an environment where real relationships can thrive. Here are some things to keep in mind as you do that:

- **Multiply.** The mission of the church is to multiply disciples. Groups are one of the environments where this occurs. You are involved in the discipleship of each person in your group. We ask that each of our group leaders has someone who they are equipping to be a disciple-maker.
- **Create a safe environment.** When we say 'safe', we mean an environment where participants can freely share without feeling belittled or that what they share will get spread beyond the group. When we say 'safe', we also mean a group where participants can encounter Jesus and His plan for their life.
- **Recognize that your group is unique.** This booklet is designed to be a general guide, but every group is unique. So when you're planning, take into account what does and doesn't work for your group and shape the session to their personalities and needs.
- **Review the ground rules.** Periodically, remind your group about the ground rules for the group.
- **Ask lots of questions.** Engaging leaders draw participants into the discussion. Ask many questions and lead your group into self-discovery.
- **Get feedback.** Improve your group by asking others for feedback.
- **Seek wise council.** There are some questions you won't be able to answer and some situations you aren't trained to handle. That's OK! Know who your wise council is (whether a coach, minister, or another disciple-maker) and turn to them in your time of need.

For more on this topic, check out *Servant-Leadership Training* and the *CCW Group Leader Training 2.0* resource on RightNow Media.

Before the Session

Prepare for the Session: As a group leader, it's essential to be prepared. Before the group session:

1. **Pray.** These are God's Words and it is His Spirit that provides authentic transformation. So take time to turn the group over to Him.
2. **Take time to read over the Bible passage.** While reading, write down any questions that you have about the text.
3. **Preview the session guide.** Read through the session guide. Shape the session for your group by highlighting important questions to ask and adding your own.
4. **Tap into study resources.** Broaden your understanding of the biblical text by tapping into additional study resources. Discover the answers to your questions and increase your knowledge of the Biblical content. These study resources can be found in the Resource Center at CCW, the back of this guide, and in a variety of other places.

During the Session

Icebreaker: Get the discussion rolling with an icebreaker activity or question. We've provided one for you, but you know your group better than us! The goal is to get them talking.

Share: Take time to review the content from last week. Two important things to ask group participants about during this time are:

- **Prayer Requests:** If a group participant made a prayer request the previous week, make sure to take this opportunity to follow up on what God is doing in their life.
- **Application and Challenges:** Some weeks give specific challenges for groups to attempt throughout the week. Other times, a group participant will take on a challenge as a result of application discussion (e.g. 'This week, I would like to...'). Either way, take time to ask about these.

Transition: In the Transition, we give you a way to shift gears into the Bible reading and focus of the night. Usually this comes in the form of something simple that can be said (stated in italics).

Read It: Read through the Scripture passage. If it's a larger section of scripture, break it into smaller sections and ask questions throughout.

Talk About It: After reading, the next step is to make sure that the Bible passage is understood in its context. The main ways to do this are:

1. As a group, *retell* the story in your own words.
2. Ask *review questions*, which are provided in each small group session.

3. Take some time to *ask the key questions*. These questions are the same in each session and they help to bridge the gap between understanding and application.

Apply It: Ultimately, the Bible should shape who we are and how we live our lives. So once we have read over the text and reviewed the text, it's essential that we personalize it through application. The apply it section may have both (a) application questions and (b) challenges. Challenges are real-life ways to put Biblical Truth into effect this week.

Pray Together: Find creative ways to engage your group in prayer.

After the Session

Follow Up: Real relationships aren't formed in a single weekly session. They are formed as a result of ongoing presence in the lives of one another. Follow up with group members throughout the week:

- Remind them of their application/challenge commitments
- Check in on prayer requests
- Find opportunities to do life together.

Input Group Attendance: As a CCW group, you should receive an e-mail asking for your group's attendance. Filling in this form is incredibly important to the continued spiritual development for those connected to CCW.

The point: please take time to use this valuable resource!

(A) ADORATION

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What does it mean to 'adore' something?
- What are some words that you have heard people use to describe something or someone that they adore?

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

Over the course of this series, we're going to look at some real examples of prayers from the book of Psalms. The acronym 'ACTS' will be our guide. ACTS stands for 'Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication' - four different types of prayer that should become part of our prayer life. This week, we'll check out a prayer of adoration written by King David.

Read It

Scripture reference: **Psalm 145**

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.

2 Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

6 They shall speak of the might of your awe-

some deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

7 They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

9 The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.

10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you!

11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power,

12 to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

[The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.]

14 The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.

15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.

16 You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.

18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

19 He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.

20 The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

Review It

- If you were going to describe this Psalm in a single word, what would it be?
- How does the Psalmist say that the celebratory news of God will pass to new generations (v.4 - 7)?
- What does it mean for the Psalmist to 'meditate' on the works of God?
- How will the works of God show His glory (v.10 - 12)? What are these works?
- How do the attributes of God (e.g. gracious, merciful) shape the actions of God? Why might it be important to worship the attributes of God and not just His actions?
- As a group, make a list of the words of affirmation that the Psalmist used to describe God?
- Which of these words/phrases stick out to you the most?

Apply It

- What in this Psalm challenges the way you think about God?
- What quality of God is most awe-inspiring to you? How might you describe this attribute to someone else?
- What do you find challenging about showing adoration in your prayer life?
- What makes God worthy of our adoration?

- How might 'adoring' God change how you pray?
- What are some ways you might start showing God more Adoration in your time interacting with Him?

Challenge

Write a Psalm

Write your own Psalm of adoration this week. What words will you use to describe the amazing qualities of God?

Make an Adoration Playlist

Create a playlist of worship songs that you find truly speak words of adoration to God. Surround yourself with this music this week.

Read More Psalms

Other Psalms of Adoration include: Psalm 104 and 96.

Pray Together

Have an open circle prayer time where you openly declare what you adore about God. If this seems challenging, set a timer for 5 minutes and use that time for this purpose.

NOTES

Take time to complete your ChurchTeams group attendance sheet (found in your email).

(C) CONFESSION

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- As a child, when were you forced to make a confession of something that you did wrong? What was that experience like?

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

As we continue in expanding our prayer life, we will look at what it means to confess in and thru prayer. The book of Psalms is full of heart-wrenching prayers of confession, such as the one we'll be looking at in Psalm 32.

Read It

Scripture reference: **Psalm 32**

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity;

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may

be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

7 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.

11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Review It

- What kind of person does the Psalmist say is 'blessed' (v.1 - 2)?
- How did the Psalmist describe the feeling of holding in guilt (v.3 - 4)? What does he mean?
- What was the product of the Psalmists remorse (v.5)?
- Why does the Psalmist express the urgency of confession (v.6 - 7)?
- To what does the Psalmist compare an unrepentant person (v.9)?
- What do we learn about human beings from this Psalm?
- What do we learn about God from this Psalm?

Apply It

- Which words in this Psalm really stuck out to you?
- If you were describing the prayer practice of 'confession' to somebody else, what words would you use?
- What do you think would be the product of openly confessing your sins before God?
- How urgent are you to confess your sins before God? What holds you back?
- What warning might you give to someone of the importance of confession?
- How can you build regular confession into your prayer times this week?

Challenge

Write a Psalm

Write your own Psalm of Confession this week. What brokenness in your life do you need to place before God?

Read More Psalms

Other Psalms of Confession include: Psalm 130, 6, and 51.

Pray Together

Have the group pair off. Have a time of prayerful confession and healing. Remind the group that transparent sharing is only the result of confidentiality.

NOTES

Take time to complete your ChurchTeams group attendance sheet (found in your email).

(T) THANKSGIVING

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What are some ways in which you typically show gratitude to someone?
- What are the ways you appreciate being shown gratitude?

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

Thanksgiving is the act of acknowledging where all good comes from and then praising God for that goodness. As we continue to unpack ACTS in relation to our prayer life, we will look at one of the most famous Psalms of thanksgiving.

Read It

Scripture reference: **Psalm 136**

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

2 Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;

4 to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever;

5 to him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever;

6 to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever;

7 to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever;

8 the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever;

9 the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever;

10 to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, for his steadfast love endures forever;

11 and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures forever;

12 with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures forever;

13 to him who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever;

14 and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever;

15 but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever;

16 to him who led his people through the wilderness, for his steadfast love endures forever;

17 to him who struck down great kings, for his steadfast love endures forever;

18 and killed mighty kings, for his steadfast love endures forever;

19 Sihon, king of the Amorites, for his steadfast love endures forever;

20 and Og, king of Bashan, for his steadfast love endures forever;

21 and gave their land as a heritage, for his steadfast love endures forever;

22 a heritage to Israel his servant, for his steadfast love endures forever.

23 It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever;

24 and rescued us from our foes, for his

steadfast love endures forever;

25 he who gives food to all flesh, for his steadfast love endures forever.

26 Give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Review It

- Why do you think this Psalmist placed such an emphasis on the phrase, 'His steadfast love endures forever'?
- What are some of the titles that the Psalmist addresses God with (v.1 - 3, 26)?
- What are some of the ways that the Psalmist sees God's love showing up to all humans (v.4 - 9)?
- What are some of the things in Israel's history that the Psalmist cites as evidence of God's love (v.10 - 24)?
- What do we learn about human beings from this Psalm?
- What do we learn about God from this Psalm?

Apply It

- What sticks out to you most from this Psalm?
- How well do you show gratitude to God for what He has done for you?

NOTES

- What are some things in this world that all human beings can be grateful for?
- What are some things in your history that you can show gratitude to God for?
- What are some things that you may overlook thanking God for?
- How can you grow in your ability to practice Thanksgiving in your conversations with God?

Challenge

Be

In your prayer life this week, commit to only making statements of thanksgiving to God. Be creative and thank Him for things you would normally take for granted.

Write a Psalm

Write your own Psalm of Thanksgiving this week. What do you need to show more gratitude for?

Read More Psalms

Other Psalms of Thanksgiving include: Psalm 146, 100, and 111.

Pray Together

Have an open prayer time and have everyone chime in. The only rule: all prayers must begin with the words, 'Thank you God...'

Take time to complete your ChurchTeams group attendance sheet (found in your email).

(S) SUPPLICATION

Icebreaker

Spend some time opening conversation with this question:

- What were the top items on your Christmas wishlist when you were ten years old?

Transition

It's time to move towards reading God's Word. Transition your group into the study by saying something like:

Supplication is the act of making a request of God. As we wrap up our series on prayer, we'll discover that it's not selfish to prayerfully ask in Jesus' name - He wants to hear what's on our hearts.

Read It

Scripture reference: **Psalm 142 - 143**

With my voice I cry out to the Lord; with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord.

2 I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.

3 When my spirit faints within me, you know my way! In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me.

4 Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul.

5 I cry to you, O Lord; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

6 Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me!

7 Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name!

The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.

1 Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy! In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

2 Enter not into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you.

3 For the enemy has pursued my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

4 Therefore my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled.

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands.

6 I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah

7 Answer me quickly, O Lord! My spirit fails!

Hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

8 Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust.

Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.

9 Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord! I have fled to you for refuge.

10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

11 For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life! In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!

12 And in your steadfast love you will cut off my enemies, and you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul, for I am your servant.

Review It

- What words does the Psalmist use to describe this interaction with God (v.1 - 2)? What does it mean to 'pour out my complaints'?
- What concerns does the Psalmist express in Psalm 142?
- How will the Psalmist respond to God's salvation (v.7 - 8)?
- What does the Psalmist mean by, 'my spirit faints with me'? When have you felt like that?
- What does the Psalmist request of God in Psalm 143 (v.7 - 12)? What do you think of these requests?
- Why does the Psalmist feel confident in expressing even his most selfish requests to God?

Apply It

- What most stuck out to you most from these Psalms?
- What do you find yourself regularly requesting of God? What is the motivation behind those requests?
- The Psalmist uses some incredibly emotive words to describe how he is feeling: crushed, darkness, faint, appalled, parched. What experiences have driven you into a conversation with God?
- What should be our response when God

doesn't answer our requests in the time and fashion that we expect?

- What are some tips that you would give to someone else about making requests of God?
- How can you build Supplication into your prayer life this week?

Challenge

Write a Psalm

Write your own Psalm of Supplication this week. What is on your heart that you need to request of God?

Read More Psalms

Other Psalms of Supplication include: Psalm 27, 121, and 86.

Pray Together

Give everyone a blank notecard to write down their requests on. Mix up the notecards and distribute them to pray over this week.

NOTES

Take time to complete your ChurchTeams group attendance sheet (found in your email).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **REDUX: PRAYER**

As a Church, we're making it a goal to pray more this year. One of the ways that we're challenging you to join in is through using the app, Prayer: Redux. Download it and begin deepening your prayer life with our community!

- **RIGHTNOW MEDIA**

Get a free RightNow Media account to get access to thousands of study resources. Some potential resources include:

- **The Prayer Course** (Pete Grieg): An eight session journey through the Lord's Prayer. Conversation, testimony and teaching to help you, and your community, to grow and deepen your prayer life, one week at a time.
- **The Prayer Course II: Unanswered Prayer** (Pete Grieg): The Prayer Course II: Unanswered Prayer is an opportunity for groups to process pain and disappointment; to ask truthful and significant questions of faith; and to unite in the face of uncertainty towards healing and hope. Join 24-7 founder Pete Greig and BAFTA award-winning TV presenter Gemma Hunt as they journey through the final days of Jesus, asking some of the hardest and most personal questions we face as Christians, such as "How am I going to get through this?," "Why aren't my prayers being answered?" and "Where is God when heaven is silent?"
- **Prayer** (Matt Chandler): God calls us to be a people of prayer, desperately depending on Him to move and transform hearts and lives. In this series, The Village Church focuses on three prayer topics: racial reconciliation, the sanctity of human life and the nations.
- **Teach Us To Pray** (Chase Replogle): For centuries, believers have memorized and used the Lord's Prayer as a study for approaching God in prayer. We pray it with the confidence of knowing Jesus himself taught it to his disciples as a model, a response to their request, "Lord, teach us to pray." In this 7-part series, you'll take a closer look at each element of Christ's prayer, learning to pray it and apply its perspective to your own lives. You'll learn more than just the words; you'll learn how this prayer can reorient your whole life, how it can reshape the way you see the world and your place in it. Join us as we learn these lessons from The Lord's Prayer.

If you're not yet connected to RNM, please contact the CCW Offices or go to ccw.church/rightnow-media/ to sign up.

- **THE BIBLE PROJECT** (www.thebibleproject.com)

The Bible Project offers a variety of amazing resources. These videos expand on many of the ideas that we have touched on in this series.