

PRAYER

"Men and women are at their noblest and best when they are on their knees before God in prayer... To pray is not only to be truly godly; it is also to be truly human." — John Stott

"Prayer is not primarily saying words or thinking thoughts. It is, rather, a stance. It's a way of living in the Presence." — Richard Rohr

"To intercede for another means that in our prayer we stand between-or next to - them and God." — Brian C. Taylor

SYNOPSIS:

Prayer is a posture of your heart and attitude where you are expecting to hear God speak with you. It is both talking with the Creator of the universe and listening to Him. Adding a rhythm of prayer to your life provides a pattern for attending to God throughout the day.

GOD-GIVEN FRUIT:

When prayer becomes part of your daily rhythm, you can see some of the following fruit. Prayer develops a deeper relationship with God as He delights in communicating with us. Prayer also expresses our dependency and trust in God. It ultimately aligns our hearts with the heart of God and builds up our faith. We are able to grow and develop because we are in union with God.

EXAMPLES:

Prayer can happen in many different ways. Try one of the following examples this week to expand your prayer rhythm. **Breath prayer:** repeat simple one-sentence prayer that begins with a biblical name of God that is meaningful to you; follow the name with a word or phrase expressing your deep God-given desire; connect the prayer to your breathing and return to it throughout the day. **Fixed-hour prayer:** Stop at the top of every hour and spend a few minutes in prayer. **Listening prayer:** Notice when a song or reading grabs at your heart; don't move on; listen for what God is saying at that moment and respond.

BASELINE SUGGESTION:

If prayer is not a regular rhythm for you, we suggest trying the following practice for this week. Intentionally come into the presence of God. Become quiet and attentive. As people or places come to mind, picture bringing them to Jesus. Does Jesus say anything to you about these people? When you have brought everyone to Jesus, leave them with Him. Tell Jesus your intent is to leave these people in His care rather than look after them on your own. Throughout the day, return in your mind to the comfort that these people are with Jesus.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS:

1 What is your current prayer rhythm? What would you like to add or take away to enhance this rhythm in your daily life?

2 The first step into meditation involves creating an environment of silence but learning to listen is also facilitated by learning to practice God's presence throughout the day. What are some things you do that help you live in greater awareness of God's presence?

3 What would you need to do to create a space for prayer rhythm in your home?

4 What is your plan for practicing prayer this week? Be as specific as possible.

- Downstream**
A practice that comes easily or naturally to you.
- Upstream**
Practices that don't come easily; a practice that seems difficult or unnatural to you.

Would prayer be beneficial for you to pursue? Why or why not?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

How do you practice Paul's injunction to pray without ceasing?

What do your requests to God reveal about your priorities, goals, desires, and heart?

How do you remind yourself throughout the day that there is more to life than work, tasks, and transactions?

How do you feel about memorized prayers or using the prayers of others?

What is the experience of praying with others like for you?

What makes a prayer authentic?

RHYTHM PLAN

What:

When:

Where: