**Study Series: Spiritual Disciplines**

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**Lesson Title: “Prayer…for the Purpose of Godliness” (pp. 94 - 103)**

January 24, 2021 Session 08

**The main point of this lesson is:** To be like Jesus (godly), we must learn to pray as He did.

Focus on this goal: To help adults adopt a personal strategy for growing stronger in prayer.

Key Bible Passages: Luke 11:1; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17

To the Leader:

1. **Show** the spiritual disciplines poster you created (Session 6, Step 1, p. 78).
2. If you are able to obtain a copy of Spiritual Disciplines by Donald Whitney, **read the excerpt** about George Muller combining meditation and prayer (pp. 74-76) (or read at <https://www.georgemuller.org/devotional/category/devotions>). **Be prepared to relate** that illustration during Step 5.

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Encourage** the group to list ways people connect with others.

**Invite volunteers to share** which means of connection they most prefer to use.

**Ask:** What means of connection did you really begin to value during the coronavirus pandemic and why?

**Declare:** God has given us prayer as a means of connecting with Him. This study can help us more deeply value prayer and motivate us to adopt strategies for growing stronger in prayer.

**Step 2. Day One – Prayer Is Expected, Part 1**

**Request adults** recall from Romans 8:29 the direction of spiritual disciplines.

**Read** Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12.

**Ask:** What is obvious from these verses?

**Emphasize** from Day One (p. 94), “to be like Jesus we must pray.”

**Discuss** Day One, activity 1 (p. 95).

**Note** activity 2 (p. 95) challenges participants to insert their names before these statements to emphasize that prayer is not an impersonal requirement.

**Ask a volunteer to read** the Day One margin/pull quote (p. 95).

**Ask:** How could really grasping the personal nature of the expectation that we pray help us become more faithful in prayer?

**Step 3. Day Two – Prayer Is Expected, Part 2**

**Invite a volunteer to read** Colossians 4:2.

**Discuss:** What would it look like to live out that verse?

**Ask** how many of the means of connection mentioned in Step 1 provide constant and/or instant connection.

**Declare** 1 Thessalonians 5:17 indicates believers should take advantage of constant connection with God.

**Evaluate** what it looks like practically to pray continually.

**Analyze** the difference between prayer pessimists and prayer optimists.

**Ask:** How can we move further toward being prayer optimists?

**Declare** numerous Scriptures, including Ephesians 6, indicate believers are engaged in spiritual warfare.

**Ask:** How does that emphasize another reason God expects us to pray?

**Read** the last paragraph of Day Two (p. 97).

**Step 4. Day Three – Prayer Is Expected, Part 3**

**Ask:** We’ve examined many compelling reasons to pray, so why do many Christians not pray as they should?

**Use** Day Three **remarks** (pp. 97-99) **to add** to the discussion.

**Ask a volunteer to read** John 11:1‑6.

**Consider** how Mary and Martha might have felt about Jesus’ delay.

**Invite participants** **to describe** how the sisters came to know Jesus in a deeper, more powerful way.

**Ask:**

1. How can this encourage us to keep praying even when we don’t feel God’s presence?
2. How can silence from God actually be a sign of intimacy?

**Invite a volunteer to read** Philippians 4:6.

**Ask** what that verse says believers are to pray about.

**Inquire:** What would it take to compel us to pray about everything?

**Step 5. Day Four – Prayer Is Learned**

**Declare:** Since we’re to pray about everything, it makes sense to ask the Lord to teach us to pray.

**Determine** the best way to learn how to do anything.

**Urge** adults to underline and discuss the Day Four statement (p. 100), “The best way to learn how to pray is to pray.”

**Declare** meditating on Scripture guides us into powerful two-way conversations with God.

**Use** the Day Four **remarks and activity** 2 (p. 100) **to explore** how to combine the spiritual disciplines of Bible meditation and prayer. [**OPTION**:

Relate George Muller’s testimony about meditation revolutionizing his prayer.]

**Inquire:**

1. How have you learned to pray by praying with others?
2. What books have really strengthened your praying, and how?

**Step 6. Day Five – Prayer Is Answered**

**Invite responses** to Day Five, activity 1 (p. 102).

**Ask:**

1. How can we pray faithfully, fully believing God answers prayers, when we don’t always get what we asked?
2. How should we respond when we feel like our prayers aren’t answered?

**Urge** adults to examine their prayers, **noting** the personal evaluation questions from the second paragraph of Day Five (p. 102).

**Encourage adults** to persist in prayer.

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 2 (p. 103).

**Explain** Jesus wasn’t saying God is like the unjust judge. Rather He was saying if an unjust judge will respond to persistence, how much more will a just God reward persistence.

**Analyze** how persistent prayer requires and demonstrates discipline.

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Read** the last Day Five paragraph (p. 103).

**Assert:** No discipline occurs by default; we need a plan to develop the spiritual discipline of prayer. Like Jesus, we must make time to be alone with God to pray.

**Note** Jesus’ response to the disciples’ request in Luke 11:1 to teach them to pray was to give them the Lord’s Prayer, often called the Model Prayer. Adults can plan to use a pattern to guide their prayers, such as the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13, ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) or PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield).

**Urge** adults to plan to listen in their prayer times by incorporating the spiritual discipline of biblical meditation.

**Invite volunteers to share** the planned times, places, and patterns that help them devote themselves to prayer.

**Close in prayer** by quoting the disciples’ request in Luke 11:1.