

LESSON 6 Join With Others When You Pray

Have you discovered the blessings that come from praying with other Christians? Have you made it a practice to gather your family together for prayer to thank God for His goodness and to bring your needs to Him? Do you attend the prayer meetings of your church?

God draws His people closer together when they share their joys and concerns. His plan is for them to understand and care about the needs of others. We experience many blessings when we follow His plan. What a deep sense of friendship we have when we can lift the burden from a brother or sister's heart through prayer. Our faith is made stronger as we encourage each other to trust God's promises.

This lesson explains the principles of praying with others and gives us this kind of prayer from the Bible. As you apply the principles you learn, your spiritual life will become richer and more full. You will feel a stronger bond—both with your heavenly Father and with the brothers and sisters who are part of His family.

The Plan

- A. Pray With a Friend
- B. Pray With Your Family
- C. Pray With a Prayer Group
- D. Pray With the Church

The Goals

- 1. Take advantage of opportunities to pray with others.
- 2. Initiate a pattern for family prayers.
- 3. Describe how to start a prayer group.
- 4. Identify needs in your church for which you can pray.

A. PRAY WITH A FRIEND

Goal 1. Take advantage of opportunities to pray with others.

Jesus has promised to be with us in a special way wherever two or three meet together in His name. Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus to whom the risen Christ appeared as they were talking about Him, you and a friend can sense His presence. He will speak to you through the Scriptures. He is there to bless you, fill you with joy in His presence, and send you to tell others that He is alive.

It was at the dinner table that Jesus let the disciples at Emmaus know who he was. Eating with a friend provides an opportunity to get better acquainted with one another and with the Lord as we talk about what He has done for us. Many Christians invite a friend or friends to dinner to introduce them to Jesus. And He is there!

I hope you have a Christian friend who can be a prayer partner for you, someone you can pray with regularly—daily or at least once a week. It is important to have someone who can agree with you in prayer. This may be someone to help and encourage you or a new Christian who needs your help in prayer. You will certainly want to pray often with any friends whom you lead to the Lord.

The Bible offers promises of Jesus for the two or three that meet together for prayer.

Matthew 18:19–20 “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

Application

- 1 Memorize Matthew 18:19–20.
 - 2 Write in your notebook the names of friends with whom you pray individually, or with whom you might pray. If you do not have a prayer partner, see if you can find one.
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B. PRAY WITH YOUR FAMILY

Goal 2. Initiate a pattern for family prayers.

A Christian home is one of the greatest blessings. In fact, it can be a little bit of heaven on earth as the whole family worships and serves God together! If your family knows the Lord, they should enjoy with you the spiritual growth and benefits that come through family prayers every day. During these times of daily prayer, which are sometimes called “family devotions,” the parents should lead. The husband as the head of the home should lead with his wife. If only one parent in the home is a Christian, that parent should gather the children and pray with them each day, being careful to do so with gentleness and consideration.

Though parents should lead the family devotions, any member of a Christian home can ask the others to read the Bible and pray. A Christian family also prays together at their meals, thanking God for the food and asking Him to bless it.

1 Timothy 4:3–4 “They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.”

How wonderful it is when children are taught to pray for one another and for any needs in the home. They can go to their parents at any moment and have them pray for their problems. And they form a lifelong habit of recognizing God's provisions and looking to Him for guidance and help. The family that prays together strengthens the ties of love that bind them together. Life is smoother because they pray over family relationships and God answers.

PRAY

FOR the Family

Salvation for All
Family Relationships
Needs of the Family
Individual Needs

WITH the Family

In Family Devotions
At Meals
At Church
With Individuals

In case you want to have family devotions in your home (or want to help some other family to do so) here are some simple suggestions.

Suggestions for Family Devotions

1. Choose a regular time that is most convenient for everyone. Early in the morning is good. Some families have prayers at the breakfast table. Others find the evening more practical.
2. Pray together daily at the same time if possible.
3. Let each member of the family take part. This may be in reading, requests for prayer, comments, and praying.
4. Read a short and easily understood part of the Word of God, especially if there are small children in the family. (You may want to use a Bible storybook with small children.) Many families use daily reading from a devotional book.
5. Let members of the family share any questions or comments on what has been read.
6. Sing a chorus or two of praise and thanksgiving or worship.
7. Give opportunity to mention any special needs or reasons to give thanks.

8. Have a short time of prayer in which one may lead or all may take part. (I suggest short prayers so the family won't get tired and dislike prayer time.)
9. Encourage all to listen for God's voice. Expect Him to speak.
10. Do not get discouraged if there are interruptions and times when it is impossible to have family prayers. Keep on trying. Do not try to follow a set program but adapt it to the circumstances as the Lord leads.

Application

- 3** Talk with other Christians about the value of family prayers, the best time, and a good plan to follow. If you live at home, discuss this with your family. If you already have family prayers, write in your notebook any suggestions for improvement.
 - 4** Name four opportunities to pray with the other members of a family. Which of these are you using or will you use now?
 - 5** If you have the opportunity, start family prayers—even if you begin with one other person.
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C. PRAY WITH A PRAYER GROUP

Goal 3. Describe how to start a prayer group.

God is working in a wonderful way today in small prayer groups all over the world. Friends gather to study the Bible and pray; God answers prayer as they unite in faith for each one's requests. Unsaved neighbors usually accept an invitation to a friend's home more readily than they would to a church. Many are finding Christ in these home prayer meetings. Miracles of healing are taking place, God is solving problems in family relationships, and thousands are being filled with the Holy Spirit in small prayer groups.

Today's occurrences resemble those of New Testament times. The first Christians met in the Jewish temple and synagogues (Jewish places of public worship) and also in the homes of believers. Later they were persecuted and driven out of the synagogues. But they still had Christ's promise and saw it fulfilled as they met together in small groups. In homes, in caves,

down by the river, in underground caverns among the catacombs, in prison—they prayed together. And God answered prayer!

It was in the home of Cornelius, a Roman army officer, that Peter first preached the Gospel to people who were not Jews. God filled with the Holy Spirit all who had gathered there and made clear that the gospel was for all people everywhere.

Later, Peter was in prison, sentenced to death. But the believers met in the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, and prayed earnestly for Peter. Then, an angel brought Peter out of the prison, in response to the prayers of the Christians. This incident demonstrates the power of prayer. Shackles fall off, doors open, and deliverance comes when God's people meet together and pray.

The church at Philippi began in a prayer group. Paul and Silas found a group of women meeting for prayer down by the river. One of the women, Lydia, accepted Christ. She opened her home to Paul and Silas so they could have a base for their work while they were in Philippi. Great things can come out of a women's prayer meeting! The letter that Paul sent to the church at Philippi many years later shows the strength of the Philippian church.

Small groups today are usually very flexible in their program. Some meet weekly in the same home. Others meet in the homes of different members of the group. Others meet in churches, factories, offices, and schools. A group can start with only two or three persons. If there are more than twelve, it will be hard for all to take part as freely as in a smaller group. Many women's groups meet in the morning or afternoon while the men are at work and the children are in school. Mixed groups (men and women) usually meet in the evening. Some have refreshments and a time of fellowship after prayers. Others do not. Some are prayer breakfasts or luncheons held in a hotel or restaurant.

The persons in charge of a prayer group should consider the circumstances and the responsibilities of those who attend. If the meeting is too long, some will not be able to attend because of duties at home. Duties should not be neglected. Some may lose interest if the meeting is too long. However, some groups are able to put everything else aside and spend hours in communion with God. If some members have to leave early, they are free to do so. When God is working miracles, transforming lives, and filling people with His Spirit, the time seems short.

The suggestions in this lesson for family devotions can be helpful for leading a prayer group. In general, these are good steps:

1. Begin with a short time of singing. This helps focus our thoughts on God and His goodness and encourages faith.
2. Have a brief time of reading and sharing in the Word of God. This may be a Bible study with a teacher, or each one may give a Bible verse and tell how it has helped him or her.
3. Have reports about prayers that have been answered. In this way, each one can thank God for what He has done and all are encouraged to pray for other needs.
4. Encourage those who have special needs or requests for prayer to share them with the group.
5. Encourage all to take part in praying for the needs and for others as the Lord leads.

Some prayer groups are part of the program of a local church. Through them, many people can have personal experiences of belonging to the family of God. A church in Seoul, Korea, for example, grew from 23,000 members to 35,000 in just one year because of the prayer groups that were started. The groups were organized into basic units of ten people each, and they met once each week in homes all over the city. The results were amazing: conversions, miracles, growth! Today, this church is still growing as its prayer cells continue to meet and multiply.

In other areas, people from different church backgrounds meet in groups. God transforms lives, revives churches, and brings greater unity in the body of Christ as His people pray together.

Application

6 What prayer groups are in your area? List in your notebook any that you know of, when they meet, and where. Underline those that you would recommend to a friend living in your neighborhood. Pray for the groups.

7 If there is no prayer group in your neighborhood, pray about the possibility. Write in your notebook whatever the Lord says to you about the possibilities—where to meet, whom to invite, the time, how to start. Do whatever He tells you to do.



D. PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

Goal 4. Identify needs in your church for which you can pray.

The prayer-group movement is wonderful, but the church is more than prayer groups. The church must take Christ to the world, establish Christians in the faith, train them for service, and help them in their daily life and work for God. We may find great blessings, friendships, and ministry in prayer groups, but we also need to take part in a local church. And those whom we lead to Christ in the prayer groups should also be led into the fellowship of a local church. They need its ministry and should develop into strong members who can take their place in its work.

Prayer is a vital part of the church—its power. Jesus talked about the temple as a house of prayer. The disciples went to the temple to pray. The leaders of the church spent much of their time in prayer. God wants every house that is dedicated to Him for public worship to be a house of prayer, a place where He meets with His people.

Isaiah 56:7 “These I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

Acts 2:42–43 “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.”

Acts 2:46–47 “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 3:1 “One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.”

At the gate of the temple, as they were going in to pray, Peter and John saw a beggar who could not walk. In Jesus’ name they ordered him to get up and walk, and he did! As a result of this healing and Peter’s message to those who saw it, about 3,000 people accepted Christ that day. The authorities put Peter and John in jail for preaching about Jesus and ordered them not to do

it again. As soon as they were released they met with the other Christians and prayed that God would give them boldness to keep on telling people about Jesus.

Acts 4:31 “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”

How can we make God’s house one of prayer today? We include prayer in all of the various services there—Bible classes, worship services, youth meetings, evangelistic services. We give opportunities for prayer requests and have testimonies about answered prayer. Some churches have prayer rooms in which people gather to pray before the public service. Those who want to accept Christ or to be filled with the Holy Spirit go to the prayer rooms at the end of the service. Christians counsel them and pray with them. In other churches, people go to the altar in the front of the church to pray before and after the service.

Many churches are open for people to come in and pray at any time of the day. Some have an early morning prayer service before people go to their work. In many of the Korean churches, hundreds of men and women meet at 5:00 o’clock every morning to pray.

Does your church need a spiritual awakening, a revival? Does your pastor need more of the power of God in his or her ministry? Do you want the members of the church to be filled with the Holy Spirit and have the same boldness to witness that the early church did? Do you want to see miracles in answer to prayer and have the Lord add daily to your church people who are being saved? If so, pray for your church, in your church, and with your church. God is doing these things in many churches today. He can use you to bring these results to your church as you do your part and encourage others to pray.

Psalms 122:1 “I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD.’”

Psalms 134:2 “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.”

Application

8 List in your notebook the needs in your church for which you intend to pray. Pray for them.

9 Ask God how you can help develop a deeper ministry of prayer in your church. Write His answer in your notebook.



Check Your Answers

4 In family devotions, at meals, at church, and with any member of the family individually at any time, especially when he or she has a special need. Or it might be when you have a need. Several mothers testified of being healed instantly of a headache or of other problems when a small child placed his or her hand on her head and asked Jesus to make her well.

All of the other answers were your own application of the principles you have been studying. If you are doing what is suggested in these lessons, you are already growing in a ministry of prayer.

