



## Week 3 | Prayer: Our Father

# Gospel Community Leaders Guide

## Pray

As you begin, pray with your group. Pray that “the eyes of your heart would be enlightened” (Eph 1:18), so that you can see God for who He is and understand to whom you are praying. Pray that God would destroy any false ideas of Him that live in the hearts and minds of your group. Pray that members of your group would be able to view God in prayer as a loving Father who knows and cares about the needs of His children.

## Encourage

Encourage your group:

**Prayer is about communion with God.** It is not about having the right words to say, or knowing exactly what to pray for. It’s not about praying for every need you know of or spending a set amount of time in prayer. Just as we like to spend time with family and close friends without an agenda and sometimes even without conversation, prayer is simply about being in the presence of God.

**We don’t have to pray perfectly.** Romans 8:26 says that “We do not know what to pray for as we ought.” That is why “The Spirit helps us in our weakness...[He] himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” We don’t know how to pray (we will never master this), but the

Holy Spirit does. As we spend time in His presence, He will lead us in prayer and pray for us when we are too weak to know how.

**How we view God shapes how we pray.** We all have our own ideas of what God is like when we pray. We can see God as a taskmaster, an employer, or a disappointed teacher. Occasionally we might see Him as some sort of cosmic Santa Clause or genie who grants wishes. All these images will affect how we pray. When Jesus taught the crowds to pray, He told them to address God as a father who cares about the daily needs of His children. Jesus elsewhere compares Himself to a mother bird who wants to protect her children under her wings. We see Him as a shepherd, a friend, a king, the bread of life, and living water; the list goes on and on. If we find that prayer is difficult or a drudgery, it might be helpful to ask to whom you think you are actually praying. This isn't always the answer, but it may help.

## Discuss

Discuss this week's sermon and the following questions with your group:

*“Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’” - Matthew 6:9-13*

- **How do you picture God when you pray? What thoughts or feelings or images come to mind?**
- **How does this view of God affect the way you pray?**
- **How does The Lord's Prayer differ from the way we pray?**
- **What do you think The Lord's Prayer teaches us about how Jesus wants us to pray?**

## Pray

As you close, pray with your group. Encourage your group to take a few moments individually to imagine God in one of the ways He is described in Scripture (creator, healer, shepherd, friend, savior, etc.). Encourage members of your group to pray individually for a few moments with this description in mind. After a few moments, invite individuals to pray aloud if they want.