

PRAYER GROUP SUGGESTIONS

*Are you wondering how to make your small-group prayer time more powerful?
Start by focusing on prayer instead of on discussion or other activities. These ideas may help.*

Begin With Praise and Thanksgiving

The Bible challenges us to start our prayer time with praise: “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name” (Ps. 100:4). Continue to mingle praise and thanksgiving with prayer requests throughout your prayer time. Look to the biblical examples of Daniel, Elijah, and others who always began by thanking God for blessings or confessing who God is.

Ellen White adds this convicting reminder: “We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 317; take time to read this entire excellent passage on pages 315–317).

Confess Any Sin

What a difference it makes to spend the first few minutes of prayer time clearing the path for God to hear your prayers as a group. Allow God to impress your minds with any sin you need to confess. Make this a silent time for individual communion with God. Claim this promise: “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:21, 22).

Some prayer leaders prefer using a prepared guide for leading a group through confession time. You can find one sample in this resource booklet (see “Encountering God in Prayer,” by Juanita Kretschmar).

Pray in Two’s and Three’s

It is wonderful to have more people, but you only need two or three. Jesus promises, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:19, 20). Ellen White further explains: “Our Savior follows His lessons of instruction with a promise that if two or three should be united in asking anything of God it should be given them. Christ here shows that there must be union with others, even in our desires for a given object. Great importance is attached to the united prayer, the union of purpose” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 429).

Meet Every Week

Be sure to meet regularly for prayer, once a week if possible. Whenever you can, meet in person; otherwise, pray together by phone or video connection.

Pray Sentence Prayers

Instead of having each person pray a long prayer one after another, have each person pray only two or three sentences at a time. This is much easier to listen to and allows the Holy Spirit time to impress each person with what He wants you to pray about. You may add variety to the prayer time by reading occasional Bible verses or singing a verse from a familiar song. It can be a beautiful experience! God loves for us to read His Word back to Him in expressions of praise or faith. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). You’ll be amazed at how long a group can pray together and enjoy it!

Claim Bible Promises

Ask God to lead your group to promises in His Word that you can claim for the situation you are praying about. And remember to write those promises down so you can claim them again in the future. We are told to put our finger on a promise and bring it before the Lord. Thank Him in advance for answering according to His will.

“He is pleased with the faith that takes Him at His word. The mother of Augustine prayed for her son’s conversion. She saw no evidence that the Spirit of God was impressing his heart, but she was not discouraged. She laid her finger upon the texts, presenting before God His own words, and pleaded as only a mother can. Her deep humiliation, her earnest importunities, her unwavering faith, prevailed, and the Lord gave her the desire of her heart. Today He is just as ready to listen to the petitions of His people. His ‘hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear’” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 322, 323).

Agree Together in Prayer

Whenever one group member prays a request to God, be sure that some others “agree together” by briefly praying for that same request. This is powerful. Remember this promise: “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matt. 18:19). How encouraging it is to be lifted up in prayer!

Seek the Holy Spirit

Be sure to ask the Holy Spirit to show you how or what you should pray for in a situation or in a person’s life. Claim Romans 8:26: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Pray Your Requests Instead of Discussing Them

Don’t ask for prayer requests before you start to pray. Ask people to pray their requests instead, and encourage others to join in agreement and pray for those requests. Here’s why: time! Talking about the requests will take up most of your prayer time. Satan is thrilled if he can keep us talking about problems instead of praying about them. Group members will often begin counseling and suggesting solutions. But the power is not from humans but from God. The more we pray, the more His power is unleashed.

Start a Prayer Request Notebook

Use a blank note pad or spiral notebook. Draw a line down the middle of the paper and write requests in the left column and answers in the right. Update the notebook every time you meet. Some answers may take time, but keep praying and trust God’s timing. It is so exciting to look back and see how God has answered your prayers!

Remember Your Daily Time With Jesus

This is so important! What is life all about if we are not spending time daily at the feet of Jesus—talking with Him and reading His Word? If you make knowing God the first priority in your life, it will open such a beautiful experience to you. “From the secret place of prayer came the power that shook the world in the Great Reformation. There, with holy calmness, the servants of the Lord set their feet upon the rock of His promises” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 210).

“It is part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow if we did not thus ask.” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 525)