

Prayer Methods

There are a variety of ways for a group of people to pray together. How the group chooses to pray depends greatly on what each person is comfortable with. Some people, for example, might not feel comfortable praying out loud in a group. Use this list to choose a method for prayer best suited for your group. The following suggestions for different ways to pray include a full spectrum of ideas. The list begins with "low risk" methods anyone will feel comfortable with and ends with suggestions which involve each person praying aloud.

1. Let a previously assigned leader close the group in prayer. The prayer might include thanking God for the opportunity to meet together, offering praise and thanks to God, praying about situations in anyone's life that might have been shared during the meeting, and asking God's help with applying the message of the discussion. Encourage each person to pray for one another in the coming week.

2. Read a prayer together such as the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13), Paul's prayer for the Ephesians (Eph. 3:14-21) or the "Serenity Prayer":

"Lord, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot control, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen."

3. Ask the group to share their answers to the question, "How can we pray for you this week?" Remind the group that answering the question is optional. Have a previously assigned leader pray for the different prayer concerns. Asking for prayer concerns based on the discussion topic is always a good idea.

4. Form "prayer partners." Ask the group to share their prayer concerns, perhaps answering the question, "How can we help you in prayer this week?" Then group members are paired up and asked to pray for one another during the coming week. The leader or other previously assigned person can close the meeting with prayer.

5. Ask for prayer requests and then pray for one another silently. You can even ask the group members to pray silently for the person on their right or left. The leader or other previously assigned person closes the prayer time by praying aloud.

6. Ask the group to share their prayer concerns, then ask for volunteers to pray for each prayer concern. This is a good way to encourage your group to begin praying aloud for one another. For example, if Jethro requests prayer

for his ailing donkey, the leader might ask the group, "Who will pray for Jethro's donkey?" The actual prayer time is done with the group standing or seated in a circle. The leader can begin the prayer time, telling the group to pray in turn, going around the circle either clockwise or counter-clockwise. Or the leader can pray briefly for each person and then pause to let the volunteer add their prayer for that person.

7. Sentence prayers are another great way to help your group learn to pray aloud. During your prayer time, ask each person to take turns completing one of the following sentences:

"Lord, I want to praise you for ..." "Lord, show me what to do about ..." "Lord, I want to thank you for..." "Lord, please help someone I love ..."

8. When everyone in the group is comfortable praying aloud, you can ask each person to pray for the person on their right or left. This can even be done

silently if a person chooses not to pray aloud. For best results, the group should hold hands, gently squeezing the hand of the person next to

them when they have finished praying. Or each person can

say "Amen" when they have finished praying. The leader closes the prayer time when everyone has had a chance to pray.

9. A group can also pray topically. For example, the leader might say, "Lord, hear our prayers of praise and thanksgiving." Then everyone who chooses can pray accordingly. Other introductory prayer statements include:

"Lord, hear our prayers for one another."

"Lord, hear our prayers of confession."

"Lord, hear our prayers for our church."

" Lord, here our prayers for people we know who do not follow you."