



## **PRAYING TOGETHER** By Megan Hill

9/15/20      **Introduction**

Part 1

### **THE FOUNDATIONS OF PRAYING TOGETHER**

9/22/20      1. Relationship

9/29/20      2. Duty

10/6/20      3. Promise

Part 2

### **THE FRUITS OF PRAYING TOGETHER**

10/13/20      4. Love

10/20/20      5. Discipleship

10/27/20      6. Revival

Part 3

### **THE PRACTICE OF PRAYING TOGETHER**

11/3/20      7. Praying with the Church

11/10/20      8. Praying with Partners and Groups

11/17/20      9. Praying with Family and Guests

12/1/20      **Conclusion**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

GL's Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Introduction

- Think back over times in your past when you have joined with others in prayer. Which of those times remains particularly memorable to you?
- Why?
- What fruits do you see in your own heart and life as a result of praying together?

*The following are excerpts from the article, “Seven Reasons Why Prayer Meetings Fail” by Kevin DeYoung:*

Why do prayer meetings fail?

1. **We hardly take time to pray.** Even when we mean to be praying, we can spend a lot of time ramping up for prayer, giving instruction for prayer, and setting the stage for prayer.
2. **The individual prayers are too long.** Don’t be afraid to pray one or two sentences. *Less is often more.*
3. **Too few people participate.** When people pray long prayers, fewer people pray. Keep the prayers short and sweet. People will stay awake, and more people will pray.
4. **There is no variety in prayer.** Mix it up. Learn from the saints who have gone before us.
5. **We don’t stick to the allotted time.**
6. **We forget that we are praying.** We are speaking to the God of the universe.

Scripture mandates no single way to pray. It showcases passionate prayers of the Psalmist, joyful prayers of the saints in Revelation, the all-night prayers of Jesus, the short prayers of the publican (Lord be merciful to me, a sinner!) We have prayers full of confession, and others full of worship. Models for prayer can be wise and good and helpful, but there is no magic formula.

- Through these 10 weeks as we meet, we’ll pray conversationally, using the ACTS model because it is a straightforward, helpful guide for prayer in a group.

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S

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter One: Relationship

**Getting Started:** If you were to go to a park and ask various individuals, “Why do people pray?” what type of responses do you think you’d get? If you were to go into a church and ask the same question, do you think you would hear similar answers?

1. What is the impact of viewing prayer as a relational conversation rather than as therapy for our problems or a Magic 8 Ball for our questions? What does it look like in practice for prayer to have a relational element?
2. Read Hebrews 10:19-22. What is the basis for our access to relationship with God? What changes us from enemies, strangers, and aliens to beloved children of God who can call upon God as “our Father” (Matt. 6:9)? What difference does it make when we believe that we are beloved children as we come to prayer?
3. In what way is God in relationship with himself? What is meant by the word *Trinity* as an explanation for God’s nature?
4. Read Romans 8:14-34. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our prayers? What is the role of the Father and of the Son?
5. How does the picture of Jesus as the vine and us as the branches (see John 15) provide a rich imagery of our interconnectedness as a church? What other examples are given in Scripture to describe the unity of the church as one entity with many parts? How does this concept affect and direct your prayers?
6. Read Revelation 8:3-4. What does this passage say our prayers look like from the perspective of heaven? How does this knowledge, that the prayers of the saints are all going to the same place, encourage us to pray together?

*Further Study:* Read Ephesians 1:3-14.

- Nearly every verse in this prayer highlights an aspect of God's relationship with us. List the relational words and phrases you notice.
- How does Paul's prayer demonstrate understanding of God as Trinity? What does he say about the Father, the Son, and the Spirit? Do you pray with this same understanding?
- Paul's prayer repeatedly uses corporate language (we, us, our). How do you think this language would have affected the Ephesian believers who first read it? How does it affect you?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter One: Relationship

- A. Meditate on Ephesians 1:3-14.
- Who is the author of this prayer?
  - When was it written?
  - Who was this prayer for?
  - Why was it written?
- B. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:
- A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)
- C: (What sin comes to mind?)
- T: (What can you thank Him for?)
- S: (What needs are you reminded of?)
- C. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.
- D. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter Two: Duty

**Getting Started:** What are some duties you have in your family, church, or community? In our day, people often think of duty as something joyless and oppressive. Why? What are some reasons to be thankful for the duties God places in your life?

1. What are some ways you notice corporate prayer being a natural part of Old Testament believers' relationship with God and with each other? What about corporate prayer among New Testament believers? How do we stand on their foundation today?
2. Read Daniel 2:1-24. What was Daniel's situation (vv. 1-16)? What was his immediate response (vv. 17-18)? After the Lord answered, what did the friends do? (vv.19-23)?
3. In Matthew 21:3 Jesus calls the temple a "house of prayer." Would you describe your church in that way? Your home? Is praying together a normal part of your relationship with others? Why or why not?
4. Turn back to page 37-38 and reread the different occasions of prayer in the book of Acts. What are some of the things the early Christians prayed together? How do we pray these types of requests in the church today?
5. What opportunities do you have to pray with others? How can you be more intentional about making prayer together a part of your daily life?

*Further Study:* Read Matthew 6:9-13, the Lord's Prayer.

- In Matthew 6:5 and 6:7, Jesus begins his instructions for prayer with “When you pray.” How does this establish prayer as a duty?
- List the corporate phrases in this prayer (e.g., “our Father”). What does Jesus’s corporate language teach us about our duty to pray together with others?
- What are the petitions (requests) in this prayer? How do we pray those things together in our churches, communities, and homes?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter Two: Duty

- A. Meditate on Matthew 6:9-13.
  - Who is the author of this prayer?
  - When was it written?
  - Who was this prayer for?
  - Why was it written?
- B. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:
  - A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)
  - C: (What sin comes to mind?)
  - T: (What can you thank Him for?)
  - S: (What needs are you reminded of?)
- C. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.
- D. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter Three: Promise

**Getting Started:** How does the hope of blessing or reward spur you on in tasks that you find difficult?

1. What are some ways we are tempted to use a “mathematical notion of prayer” to force God to answer us? What is the problem with this approach?
2. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. What war are Christians fighting? How is praying together a part of our equipment? What characteristics should our prayer together have (vv.18-19)? What is the guaranteed result?
3. In Psalm 34, David calls on the assembled people of God to praise the Lord together. What examples of corporate praise and thanksgiving can you think of in Scripture? In your own life? How does God use these praises?
4. What is the reference point for our agreement in prayer? Why is agreement so important? How does God promise to bless unified prayer?
5. When we pray for healing, what is the object of our faith? What two kinds of healing are described in James 5:13-16? Which do you tend to focus on when you pray with your family or church?
6. A non-Christian might assume that prayer is about getting our personal desires met. How might God’s promises for praying together be surprising (or even disappointing) to a non-Christian or an immature Christian? How can we help one another to appreciate God’s priorities as we pray together?

*Further Study:* Read Acts 4:23-31, the church's prayer for boldness.

- What are the believers asking God to do?
- What attributes and promises of God do they use to make their case in prayer? Why is this kind of arguing acceptable – and even welcome – before the throne?
- How do you think praying on the basis of God's revelation affected the believers' prayer together? How can God's promises give us confidence and expectation in prayer together today?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter Three: Promise

- A. Meditate on Acts 4:23-31.
- Who is the author of this prayer?
  - When was it written?
  - Who was this prayer for?
  - Why was it written?
- B. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:
- A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)
- C: (What sin comes to mind?)
- T: (What can you thank Him for?)
- S: (What needs are you reminded of?)
- C. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.
- D. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter Four: Love

**Getting Started:** How do you know that someone loves you? How does mutual love look different from one-sided love?

1. How does prayer humble us? Why is humility a necessary part of love?
2. What kinds of work do you think of as especially important or especially difficult in the church? Read Colossians 4:12-13. What words do you notice that express Epaphras's effort as he prays? Why is prayer such hard work? What makes it so important?
3. What are some things we should pray together for the church as a whole (not just for individuals)? What should we pray for other churches? How would it encourage your church to know another church was praying for you?
4. In Matthew 5:44 Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies. Who are the enemies of God's people? Why do you think we often neglect to pray together for them?
5. We noted that text messaging and social-media platforms make it increasingly easy to ask people to pray *for us*, while conveniently distancing us from any obligation to pray *with them*. What are the problems with always asking for prayer for yourself (or your loved ones) without committing to joining others in mutual prayer?
6. How do we bear one another's burdens in prayer together? Are you willing to have others pray for you? Do you pray for others? Why is intercessory prayer especially loving when we are face-to-face with one another?

*Further Study:* Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-26, Paul's prayer for the Thessalonian church.

- What things do Paul and his companions pray together for the Thessalonian believers in verse 23-24? How does the content of their prayer demonstrate love for that church?
- How is Paul's request in verse 25 also an expression of love? Of humility?
- How might Paul's exhortation in verse 26 relate to the previous verses?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter Four: Love

A. Meditate on 1 Thessalonians 5:23-26.

- Who is the author of this prayer?
- When was it written?
- Who was this prayer for?
- Why was it written?

B. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:

A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)

C: (What sin comes to mind?)

T: (What can you thank Him for?)

S: (What needs are you reminded of?)

C. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.

D. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter Five: Discipleship

**Getting Started:** Think of someone who has had a large influence on your life. In what ways has his or her example shaped your actions, thinking, and desires?

1. In Luke 11:1 Jesus was praying, and one of his disciples requested, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Why do you think he asked this? Who was the first person who taught you to pray? What did you learn then about prayer? What did you learn about God?
2. David Clarkson wrote, “In private [worship] you provide for your own good, but in public you do good both to yourselves and others.” In what ways have other people done good to you by praying with you? What would you have missed if they had simply prayed privately?
3. What does it mean to:
  - Confess corporate sins as a community?
  - Confess individual sins corporately?
  - Confess individual sins individually?

When have you seen these practiced in your own church, community, or family?

4. When we pray together, how is repentance an antidote to pride?
5. Why is it important to understand that our desires can (and should) be trained? What standard do we use for our desires? If prayer is an expression of our desires, how does praying with other people help us to nurture right desires?
6. How does public thanksgiving glorify God? How does it do good to those praying with us? What opportunities do you have to give thanks to God in the hearing of others?

*Further Study:* Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10, the prayer of Hannah; and Luke 1:46-55, the praise of Mary.

- What were the circumstances of both Hannah's prayer and Mary's praise?
- List the words and phrases that these two prayers have in common. What other similarities do you notice?
- What do you learn from the prayers of Hannah and Mary? What other prayers in the Bible have taught you about the life of faith?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter Five: Discipleship

A. Meditate on 1 Samuel 2:1-10.

- Who is the author of this prayer?
- When was it written?
- Who was this prayer for?
- Why was it written?

B. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:

A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)

C: (What sin comes to mind?)

T: (What can you thank Him for?)

S: (What needs are you reminded of?)

C. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.

D. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter Six: Revival

**Getting Started:** When you hear the word *revival*, what first comes to your mind? Could you explain revival to a Christian friend, a non-Christian, or to a child?

1. J.I. Packer defined revival as “an extraordinary work of God the Holy Ghost reinvigorating and propagating Christian piety in a community.” Why is it important to understand that revival is a corporate (and not just an individual) blessing?
  - What is meant by “reinvigorating Christian piety in a community”? What do you think that might look like in your church?
  - What is meant by “propagating Christian piety in a community”? What do you think that might look like in your town or city?
  - Why is it important to have revival in the church as well as in the wider community? Is it possible to have one without the other? How might corporate revival relate to personal revival?
2. Read John 16:8; Romans 8:4; Galatians 5:22-23; and Ephesians 5:18-19. How do these verses expand your understanding of what it means for a church or a community to grow in Christian piety?
3. Who is the author of revival? What is the difference between having faith in revival and having faith in God? Why is that distinction important?
4. How are missions and revival related? What encouragement do we have to pray together for the conversion of large numbers of people?

5. Read Luke 11:5-13. What encouragement(s) do we find in this passage regarding prayer?  
How could we apply this passage to praying together for revival?

*Further Study:* Read Psalm 85.

- What is the congregation of God's people asking God to do?
- What did God do for them in the past? How does this compel and invigorate their request for the future? How can the church today pray on the basis of God's revival in the past?
- In this psalm, the congregation lists several specific characteristics of revival. What are they? Do we desire God to do those same things for us?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter Six; Revival

A. Meditate on Psalm 85.

- Who is the author of this prayer?
- When was it written?
- Who was this prayer for?
- Why was it written?

B. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:

A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)

C: (What sin comes to mind?)

T: (What can you thank Him for?)

S: (What needs are you reminded of?)

C. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.

D. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter Seven: Praying With the Church

**Getting Started:** List three things you do regularly with your church. Which of those is your favorite? Why? Which of those is the most important? Why?

1. In what two ways should our Lord's Day prayer with the church be "substantial"? Why? What does it mean to "pray until you pray"?
2. Why is leading in prayer the special duty and privilege of the elders? What would you say to someone who thinks that the elders lead in prayer because their prayers are better or more acceptable to God?
3. Why is it sometimes difficult to pray while someone else leads? What bad habits do you have during prayer in church? How can you seek to overcome them?
4. Why is it sometimes difficult to lead others in prayer? What bad habits do you have during prayer meetings? How can you seek to overcome those habits?
5. What are ways you could encourage your church to pray together?

*Further Study:* Read 2 Chronicles 6:12-42, Solomon's prayer of dedication.

- How does Solomon begin his prayer (vv. 14-15)? What can we learn from his introduction?
- List the petitions Solomon makes in his prayer on behalf of the people. How can we pray for similar things today?
- In what way was Solomon speaking as the voice of the entire assembly? What can you apply to your prayer as a congregation member? What can you apply as someone who leads others in prayer?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter Seven: Praying With the Church

A. Meditate on Ephesians 1:3-14.

- Who is the author of this prayer?
- When was it written?
- Who was this prayer for?
- Why was it written?

B. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:

A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)

C: (What sin comes to mind?)

T: (What can you thank Him for?)

S: (What needs are you reminded of?)

C. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.

D. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter Eight: Praying With Partners and Groups

**Getting Started:** Who are your closest friends? Why? What makes certain people great friends?

1. Read Daniel 2:17-19. In this passage Daniel asks his friends to pray with him. What makes friendship ideal for praying together? How have friendships led to praying together in your life? How has praying together deepened your friendships?
2. Read Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; and Philem. 22. What do you notice about Paul's requests? How do our personal prayer requests illuminate what is most important to us?
3. What kinds of requests do you typically pray about with others? What are some pitfalls we should avoid as we share requests? How would you like to pray in new ways after reading this chapter?
4. What is the relationship between scheduled prayer and spontaneous prayer? What keeps you from scheduled prayer? What keeps you from spontaneous prayer?
5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "It is in fact the most normal thing in the common Christian life to pray together." To what extent has this been your experience? How could you make praying together "normal" in your life?

*Further Study:* Read Colossians 1:1-14..

- What general characteristics describe this prayer?
- List the items they pray for the church. Do you pray that way with others for your own church and for other churches?
- Look at verses 3 and 9. What do you notice about *when* they pray? Could you say those things about your own prayer with others?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter Eight: Praying With Partners and Groups

- E. Meditate on Colossians 1:1-14.
- Who is the author of this prayer?
  - When was it written?
  - Who was this prayer for?
  - Why was it written?
- F. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:
- A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)
- C: (What sin comes to mind?)
- T: (What can you thank Him for?)
- S: (What needs are you reminded of?)
- G. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.
- H. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Chapter Nine: Praying With Family and Guests

Getting Started: What is meant by “Home is where the heart is”? What do you love best about your home? If someone spent a day in your home, what would they learn about you?

1. Think about the suggestions in chapter 8 for praying with partners and groups. How could you apply these to praying in your home?
  - Who could you pray with?
  - What topics could you pray about?
  - When and where could you pray?
2. Do you pray regularly with your spouse? From Scripture, how do we know this is important? Why is it sometimes difficult?
3. Read Matthew 19:13-15. How is this passage often misread? In what ways should we pray like those parents? How can this apply to every Christian who interacts with children?
4. Read Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; and 1 Peter 4:9. What are we commanded to do and for whom? Why are we often quick to offer physical food but slow to offer spiritual nourishment in our homes?
5. Have you ever thought of prayer as an element of evangelism? What could a non-Christian learn from hearing you pray?

Further Study: Read Matthew 21:6-16.

- In verses 8-9 who is doing the praising? What about in verse 15? How did those children learn to pray? How did you learn to pray?
- What is Jesus's response to the children's praise? How can we as parents – and also as pastors, Sunday school teachers, and babysitters – encourage children to pray?
- In verses 10-11, who confronts spiritual truth as a result of hearing these praises? What about in verses 15-16? How can our family prayers be a testimony to others?
- Read Psalm 8:2. What is one of God's purposes in ordaining praise from the weakest members of his kingdom?

### Additional Study Questions: - Chapter Nine: Praying With Family and Guests

A. Meditate on Matthew 21:6-16.

- Who is the author of this prayer?
- When was it written?
- Who was this prayer for?
- Why was it written?

B. Note ways that you could use this passage in various elements of your prayer:

A: (What attributes of God do you see here?)

C: (What sin comes to mind?)

T: (What can you thank Him for?)

S: (What needs are you reminded of?)

C. Write a prayer based on this prayer, or on your response to this prayer.

D. For discussion: is there anything you want to remember from the lesson today?

# Praying Together

## Study Questions – Conclusion:

- What circumstances or insecurities sometimes hinder you from praying with God's people?
- How can the example of others encourage you?
- How can meditating on Christ's presence overcome your reluctance?
- Relying on God's help, what resolutions do you have for praying together in the future?