

Empower  
Session 8

# Establishing Our Prayer Life

## Establishing Our Prayer Life

Let's do a quick review of the important elements for spiritual growth that we have studied so far:

- Regular habits of public worship and fellowship are absolutely essential

“Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together to worship”

When God gathers us together as “living stones” - what power! What a sense of His presence we receive just from being together.

Illustration: Like the farmer and the “log fire” (list the logs)

A Christian must regularly participate with his fellow believers in all the beneficial aspects of public worship: teaching, sharing, praying, ministering, serving, loving ...

These experiences provide the kindling upon which the fire of the Holy Spirit falls. If we find ourselves separated from the “burning pile” then we will cool off; our spiritual vitality will die out.

- A regular habit of feeding on God's Word is also essential

We shared in the last lesson about a rule that one Christian brother used to make sure he had daily intake from God's Word - “No Bible, no breakfast!”

We also mentioned about the debilitating disease suffered by so many undernourished children and adults in poverty stricken countries - “Kwashiorkor”. Likewise, many Christian live in a weakened condition suffering from severe spiritual malnutrition.

- Preliminary Suggestions (read through suggestions in participants notes)
- And now, we must recognize a vital prayer life is absolutely essential for our spiritual growth

## ESTABLISHING OUR PRAYER LIFE

### REGULAR HABITS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP ARE ESSENTIAL

If a Christian is to grow in his life with the Lord, he must not forsake public worship. The church provides several different types of services and regular study or fellowship opportunities for a well-rounded experience of growth.

### A REGULAR HABIT OF FEEDING ON GOD'S WORD IS ESSENTIAL

Illustration: No Bible, no morning meal

This must become a definite daily discipline. A large percentage of the effectiveness of our spiritual life and growth will depend on establishing regular “feeding” habits.

Many Christians struggle all their lives in a weakened condition suffering from severe malnutrition.

Illustration: Kwashiorkor (A disease that affects due to malnutrition)

### PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS:

1. Cultivate a regard for the Bible as literally the Word of God and treat it as such.
2. Make up your mind that you are going to read your Bible every day of your life, and make a time in each day when you will read it.
3. Always begin your Bible reading with an earnest prayer for God's enlightenment and guidance.
4. Read your Bible sensibly, earnestly, and ardently with this in mind: “What message will I find revealed in the Bible for my life today?”
5. Start reading and studying the easier portions first.
6. Build your life around the Bible.
7. You must resolve to obey the Word of God as you read it.

As we turn to regular habits of prayer fellowship, we'll be taking a look at ... what prayer is, various types of prayer (public and private), when to pray, and how to pray.

There are many misconceptions about prayer and some of us are uneasy when asked to pray in public, but basically at it's heart, **PRAYER IS JUST COMMUNICATION** with God.

When we can grasp this truth it will help us to peel off a lot of stuff that gets in the way of our having an effective prayer life.

- We don't have to be in any particular setting, we don't have to assume any particular posture, we don't have to go about it in any particular order, we just have to be in communication with God; our heart and God's heart joined together.

Communication with God is simply staying in touch with him.

In many troubled marriages we often find that there is a breakdown in the communication between the husband and the wife.

- Sometimes this occurs early. A young wife will confide in a pastor or friend, "he doesn't talk to me anymore," "something's different," we don't communicate our thoughts, fears, requests, needs, and our love for one another.
- If we went days or weeks or months without talking to the Lord, it would sour our relationship with Him, just as it would it would weaken and ruin our marriage relationship if we went days or weeks or months not talking to our spouse.
- And so it's vital that we work on having consistent and open, regular and frequent communication with the Lord.

Since our Father wants to communicate many things to us, we need to be constantly reaching out to Him, and forming a habit of:

- Walking before Him in gratefulness and praise
- Listening often for His voice
- Calling upon Him at every occasion of need
- Sharing with Him all of the thoughts and desires of our heart

**REGULAR HABITS OF PRAYER FELLOWSHIP IS ESSENTIAL**

Prayer is Communication with God.

HOME PRAYER Recitation -versus- conversation

Whether it is grace at the table or bedtime prayers or family worship, let it all GROW out of the free and natural expression of our life together. Be honest before God. Let praise be a big part of your prayer in the home.

Do not teach your children little memorized prayers which they repeat over and over. A child does not have to be very old before he can begin to express prayer from the heart in his own words:

“I love you, Jesus,” “thank you, Jesus, for my mommy and daddy,” etc. It is a great blessing when children really learn to pray, to praise and to believe the Lord for the family’s needs and other’s as well. Children’s prayers can be powerful!

PUBLIC PRAYER Self conscious -versus- God conscious

Public prayer should also be the natural, honest expression of our heart. People find it hard to pray in public because they think they must have the “right words” to impress others. Be careful not to pray to an audience, rather, just talk with the Lord.

When you are in public prayer setting, pray from your heart along with others who are offering audible prayer. If you sense the need for victory in your life regarding praying out loud, ask the Lord to help you. Write out a short prayer or make some notes for yourself. The first several times to help get started. After a while it will become much more natural.

Remember, one real thought from the heart which you can express to God even in a stuttered sentence is more blessed and more powerful in God’s eyes than a multitude of flowery words which are not sincere.

GROUP PRAYER Conversational -versus- traditional

- No big speeches.....everyone enter in
- A good conversational is not just thinking about what they may want to say but they are also listening to what others are saying and responding accordingly
- As the prayer period progresses ask the Lord to show you what His thoughts and concerns are then pray what God is placing on your heart about each situation.
- Talk thoroughly about one subject before going on to the next item the group wishes to discuss with the Lord.

Now there are some practical areas where our prayer life needs to grow. One of those is a Home Prayer.

Home Prayer needs to be **CONVERSATION** rather than **RECITATION**.

Many of us say grace before we partake of our food, and perhaps we pray with our children before we tuck them into bed, as well as at other times ... before we start out for a trip or in times of crisis or need.

Let that prayer be natural and let it come from the heart.

- Satan has tried to tangle many of us up when it comes to prayer, keeping us from enjoying free and spontaneous conversation with God in our home and with our families.
- When we say grace, what does that sound like? Do we say, “God is great, God is good, Let us thank Him for our food”? Some people do.
- When we pray with the children at bedtime, do we have them say, “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.”? A lot of people have been raised on that little prayer. But, these are examples of recitation and not true conversation with God.
- As my children were growing up, there came a time that I wanted to give them some spending money each week so they could learn to be wise in using their money and making purchases. So, suppose I give my kids their allowance, and all five of them line up in front of me, and in unison together they said to me, “Dad, you are so good and we thank you for our allowance.”

I might reply, “Well thank you guys ...” Then the next week, I give out their allowance, and again they all line up in front of me and say in one voice, “Dad, you are so good and we thank you for our allowance..” Hmmm, well, okay.

And the next week, I give them their allowance again, and again, “Dad, you are so good and I thank you for you for our allowance.”

About that time I start to think and I may say to them, “This little jingle that you’re saying week after week. At first it was cute, but why can’t you just say, ‘Thanks, Dad!’ with sincerity and gratefulness?”

**REGULAR HABITS OF PRAYER FELLOWSHIP IS ESSENTIAL**

Prayer is Communication with God.

HOME PRAYER Recitation -versus- conversation

Whether it is grace at the table or bedtime prayers or family worship, let it all GROW out of the free and natural expression of our life together. Be honest before God. Let praise be a big part of your prayer in the home.

Do not teach your children little memorized prayers which they repeat over and over. A child does not have to be very old before he can begin to express prayer from the heart in his own words:

“I love you, Jesus,” “thank you, Jesus, for my mommy and daddy,” etc. It is a great blessing when children really learn to pray, to praise and to believe the Lord for the family’s needs and other’s as well. Children’s prayers can be powerful!

PUBLIC PRAYER Self conscious -versus- God conscious

Public prayer should also be the natural, honest expression of our heart. People find it hard to pray in public because they think they must have the “right words” to impress others. Be careful not to pray to an audience, rather, just talk with the Lord.

When you are in public prayer setting, pray from your heart along with others who are offering audible prayer. If you sense the need for victory in your life regarding praying out loud, ask the Lord to help you. Write out a short prayer or make some notes for yourself. The first several times to help get started. After a while it will become much more natural.

Remember, one real thought from the heart which you can express to God even in a stuttered sentence is more blessed and more powerful in God’s eyes than a multitude of flowery words which are not sincere.

GROUP PRAYER Conversational -versus- traditional

- No big speeches.....everyone enter in
- A good conversational is not just thinking about what they may want to say but they are also listening to what others are saying and responding accordingly
- As the prayer period progresses ask the Lord to show you what His thoughts and concerns are then pray what God is placing on your heart about each situation.
- Talk thoroughly about one subject before going on to the next item the group wishes to discuss with the Lord.

- How would you ladies like your husband to bless you with something that they've memorized? They come home and say to you, "You are so beautiful and I love you very much!" At first you might love it.

But, how would that feel if it went on for a week, or a month? Everyday, "Oh, you are so beautiful and I love you very much!"?

When you memorize something and then you recite it, where's the spontaneity? Where's the heart in it? It's difficult to make something that you recite be a true expression.

- The enemy has kept many children from learning how to really pray because their parents thought it was important for them to learn these little prayer jingles or phrases.
- Children can learn very early on to say, "I love you Jesus!" or "Thank you Jesus for mommy and daddy!" It isn't very long before kids will try to extend their bedtime by thinking about all kinds of things that they want to pray about. But how much better it is for them to speak to God that way than for them to learn something that they will repeat off the top of their head without it ever running through their heart.

#### Prayer is not recitation, it's conversation!

Every home should have set times when they come together as a family to pray.

- It might be at the evening meal. It might be first thing in the morning. A time when the family shares about the day, about what's happening in each of their lives, and then pray about these things and for each family member specifically. Perhaps a portion of the Bible could be read together.

Children should grow up in a family that prays together on a regular basis with father leading the way

- Some men may think that they won't do as well as the mother would ... but that's just pride. God doesn't care how good our prayers are as long as they are sincere. Kids need to know that they have a father who prays for them ... and they know it because he prays for them out loud, in their presence, about things going on in their life, on a regular basis.
- Fathers, be real with your children. And, have the kids pray for you when you have needs. Kids will respect you far more if you are honest with them about the things you need them to pray for in your life.

Childrens prayers are powerful! We've had children who when their parents are sick, say "Mommy, can I pray for you?" And they've prayed for them and the Lord has healed them.

- Why not? When the kids were sick, the parents would pray for them. So when the parents are sick, it's just "natural" for the kids to want to prayer for them.
- God responds to children's prayers because they have a simple faith, they are so open to the Lord. There are many things that we will miss if we don't teach our kids 1) to pray and 2) how to pray.

**REGULAR HABITS OF PRAYER FELLOWSHIP IS ESSENTIAL**

Prayer is Communication with God.

HOME PRAYER Recitation -versus- conversation

Whether it is grace at the table or bedtime prayers or family worship, let it all GROW out of the free and natural expression of our life together. Be honest before God. Let praise be a big part of your prayer in the home.

Do not teach your children little memorized prayers which they repeat over and over. A child does not have to be very old before he can begin to express prayer from the heart in his own words:

“I love you, Jesus,” “thank you, Jesus, for my mommy and daddy,” etc. It is a great blessing when children really learn to pray, to praise and to believe the Lord for the family’s needs and other’s as well. Children’s prayers can be powerful!

PUBLIC PRAYER Self conscious -versus- God conscious

Public prayer should also be the natural, honest expression of our heart. People find it hard to pray in public because they think they must have the “right words” to impress others. Be careful not to pray to an audience, rather, just talk with the Lord.

When you are in public prayer setting, pray from your heart along with others who are offering audible prayer. If you sense the need for victory in your life regarding praying out loud, ask the Lord to help you. Write out a short prayer or make some notes for yourself. The first several times to help get started. After a while it will become much more natural.

Remember, one real thought from the heart which you can express to God even in a stuttered sentence is more blessed and more powerful in God’s eyes than a multitude of flowery words which are not sincere.

GROUP PRAYER Conversational -versus- traditional

- No big speeches.....everyone enter in
- A good conversational is not just thinking about what they may want to say but they are also listening to what others are saying and responding accordingly
- As the prayer period progresses ask the Lord to show you what His thoughts and concerns are then pray what God is placing on your heart about each situation.
- Talk thoroughly about one subject before going on to the next item the group wishes to discuss with the Lord.

Another important area for prayer is Public Prayer. In public prayer we need to be **GOD-CONSCIOUS** rather than **SELF-CONSCIOUS**. Many people shy away from public prayer because they are afraid of speaking out loud in a group.

However, the scriptures show that when God's people came together, tremendous things happened when they prayed. So don't neglect public prayer, but learn how to pray along with a group and how to lead out in public prayer as well.

God wants us to be real in our public prayer, just as in our private and family prayer. He doesn't want anyone posturing or trying to show how spiritual they are by the way they can pray.

- Jesus told the story about this Pharisee who publically prayed, "Oh God, I'm glad I'm not like this sinner over there." While the beggar bowed his head and said, "Oh God, be merciful to me a sinner." Jesus said, "Guess who's prayer God heard."
- Pastor Joe tells the story about a Sunday School Superintendent who prayed like an angel and even looked a little like an angel. At first, he was very impressed with this man's prayers. But by the time he left that church, he had been helping the police investigate some issues in his private life. He was as phony as you could be.
- The great evangelist, DL Moody, was having a campaign once, and he asked a local pastor to open in prayer. The pastor started to pray and he went on two minutes, then three, then four, ... he was really making the best of his chance in the limelight. Finally DL Moody stood up and said, "While Brother so-and-so finishes his prayer, let's the rest of us open our hymnals to page 56." And he led them in a hymn. Why? Because this guy was just trying to impress everybody.

The purpose of public prayer is to lead others into the presence of God by expressing our love and our need for God together.

- Some of you may feel like you may not be able to pray in public. We would like to help you be free to pray out loud with others.
- One suggestion would be to write down some notes ahead of a public prayer time if we're uncertain about what to say. Pastor Joe's wife used notes to help her get started in the beginning in public prayer ... it helped her then. She doesn't use notes now, but it helped her to feel more comfortable then.
- Sometimes husbands and wives have trouble praying together. Those who do could hold hands and recite the Lord's prayer together, and then each of them add one sentence out of their heart. Do that for a couple of days. Then add two sentences. Then add three sentences. Pretty soon, they won't need a recited prayer to get started.

**REGULAR HABITS OF PRAYER FELLOWSHIP IS ESSENTIAL**

Prayer is Communication with God.

HOME PRAYER Recitation -versus- conversation

Whether it is grace at the table or bedtime prayers or family worship, let it all GROW out of the free and natural expression of our life together. Be honest before God. Let praise be a big part of your prayer in the home.

Do not teach your children little memorized prayers which they repeat over and over. A child does not have to be very old before he can begin to express prayer from the heart in his own words:

“I love you, Jesus,” “thank you, Jesus, for my mommy and daddy,” etc. It is a great blessing when children really learn to pray, to praise and to believe the Lord for the family’s needs and other’s as well. Children’s prayers can be powerful!

PUBLIC PRAYER Self conscious -versus- God conscious

Public prayer should also be the natural, honest expression of our heart. People find it hard to pray in public because they think they must have the “right words” to impress others. Be careful not to pray to an audience, rather, just talk with the Lord.

When you are in public prayer setting, pray from your heart along with others who are offering audible prayer. If you sense the need for victory in your life regarding praying out loud, ask the Lord to help you. Write out a short prayer or make some notes for yourself. The first several times to help get started. After a while it will become much more natural.

Remember, one real thought from the heart which you can express to God even in a stuttered sentence is more blessed and more powerful in God’s eyes than a multitude of flowery words which are not sincere.

GROUP PRAYER Conversational -versus- traditional

- No big speeches.....everyone enter in
- A good conversational is not just thinking about what they may want to say but they are also listening to what others are saying and responding accordingly
- As the prayer period progresses ask the Lord to show you what His thoughts and concerns are then pray what God is placing on your heart about each situation.
- Talk thoroughly about one subject before going on to the next item the group wishes to discuss with the Lord.

When you're in a worship service and the pastor or someone else is leading in prayer, what are you doing? Are you planning your day, thinking about lunch, just waiting for him to end, or are you participating? Your heart needs to be praying right along with the one who is leading.

- You should be agreeing with his prayer in your heart. So, one of the types of public prayer is "agreeing prayer". If it's appropriate, you may even agree out loud with a series of "Amen's", or "That's right, Lord!", or "Yes, Lord!" Or, you can just agree silently in your heart.
- There is also "concert prayer", where the whole group of believers are praying together out loud at the same time. It's lifting up a whole chorus of prayer.

**REGULAR HABITS OF PRAYER FELLOWSHIP IS ESSENTIAL**

Prayer is Communication with God.

HOME PRAYER Recitation -versus- conversation

Whether it is grace at the table or bedtime prayers or family worship, let it all GROW out of the free and natural expression of our life together. Be honest before God. Let praise be a big part of your prayer in the home.

Do not teach your children little memorized prayers which they repeat over and over. A child does not have to be very old before he can begin to express prayer from the heart in his own words:

“I love you, Jesus,” “thank you, Jesus, for my mommy and daddy,” etc. It is a great blessing when children really learn to pray, to praise and to believe the Lord for the family’s needs and other’s as well. Children’s prayers can be powerful!

PUBLIC PRAYER Self conscious -versus- God conscious

Public prayer should also be the natural, honest expression of our heart. People find it hard to pray in public because they think they must have the “right words” to impress others. Be careful not to pray to an audience, rather, just talk with the Lord.

When you are in public prayer setting, pray from your heart along with others who are offering audible prayer. If you sense the need for victory in your life regarding praying out loud, ask the Lord to help you. Write out a short prayer or make some notes for yourself. The first several times to help get started. After a while it will become much more natural.

Remember, one real thought from the heart which you can express to God even in a stuttered sentence is more blessed and more powerful in God’s eyes than a multitude of flowery words which are not sincere.

GROUP PRAYER Conversational -versus- traditional

- No big speeches.....everyone enter in
- A good conversational is not just thinking about what they may want to say but they are also listening to what others are saying and responding accordingly
- As the prayer period progresses ask the Lord to show you what His thoughts and concerns are then pray what God is placing on your heart about each situation.
- Talk thoroughly about one subject before going on to the next item the group wishes to discuss with the Lord.

In Group Prayer, we want to be **CONVERSATIONAL** rather than **TRADITIONAL**.

At the bottom of the page and on the next page in your notes as well, you'll see some of the things that we want to share with you about conversational prayer.

We all have had different experiences with prayer meetings. Sometimes they seemed so boring, one speech after another, and the same speech every week. People may be sincere in doing that, but there isn't much life in it.

God has shown over the years some approaches to group prayer that are new, fresh and exciting, especially when God really shows up.

One of the best ways that we can pray in small groups is in the "Conversational Prayer" mode. Look in your notes.

Here is the difference between conversational prayer and traditional prayer.

- Just like it is in any good conversation, there are no big, long speeches. One or two people don't hold the floor for 5-10 minutes at a time, but neither do people sit there like a bump on the log without participating

Jesus said that wherever two or more are gathered together in His name, there He is in their midst. In this type of prayer, we accept Jesus' presence in our midst and, as a group, hold a conversation with Him.

It will be a lot like a good conversation with a group of relatives or friends.

- If one person monopolizes the entire conversation, we are often bored, and maybe even bothered.
- If we all join in on the conversation, sharing our own experiences regarding the topic, adding information, bouncing off what the previous person has said, then the conversation is lively and interesting and meaningful.
- In a good group conversation, everyone is listening, everyone is participating, no one is just sitting there.
- When a conversation is going well, you don't all of a sudden blurt out something that has no connection with what is being discussed. That's an interruption.
- You don't usually close your eyes while you engage in this conversation, either (where in the Bible does it say we you must close your eyes when you talk with Jesus?)

**REGULAR HABITS OF PRAYER FELLOWSHIP IS ESSENTIAL**

Prayer is Communication with God.

HOME PRAYER Recitation -versus- conversation

Whether it is grace at the table or bedtime prayers or family worship, let it all GROW out of the free and natural expression of our life together. Be honest before God. Let praise be a big part of your prayer in the home.

Do not teach your children little memorized prayers which they repeat over and over. A child does not have to be very old before he can begin to express prayer from the heart in his own words:

“I love you, Jesus,” “thank you, Jesus, for my mommy and daddy,” etc. It is a great blessing when children really learn to pray, to praise and to believe the Lord for the family’s needs and other’s as well. Children’s prayers can be powerful!

PUBLIC PRAYER Self conscious -versus- God conscious

Public prayer should also be the natural, honest expression of our heart. People find it hard to pray in public because they think they must have the “right words” to impress others. Be careful not to pray to an audience, rather, just talk with the Lord.

When you are in public prayer setting, pray from your heart along with others who are offering audible prayer. If you sense the need for victory in your life regarding praying out loud, ask the Lord to help you. Write out a short prayer or make some notes for yourself. The first several times to help get started. After a while it will become much more natural.

Remember, one real thought from the heart which you can express to God even in a stuttered sentence is more blessed and more powerful in God’s eyes than a multitude of flowery words which are not sincere.

**GROUP PRAYER** Conversational -versus- traditional

- No big speeches.....everyone enter in
- A good conversational is not just thinking about what they may want to say but they are also listening to what others are saying and responding accordingly
- As the prayer period progresses ask the Lord to show you what His thoughts and concerns are then pray what God is placing on your heart about each situation.
- Talk thoroughly about one subject before going on to the next item the group wishes to discuss with the Lord.

Read the second paragraph on the instructions page.

Go over the first 5 guidelines for conducting Conversational Prayer

Group Demonstration: Bring up 4-5 volunteers with whom you can demonstrate the concept of Conversational Prayer. Have them sit in a circle with their knees close to one another.

- You begin with praise ... two or three people say a sentence or two thanking God and praising Him for Who He is.
- One of the people in the group (e.g., Bob) has a headache. So he asks for prayer for God to deal with his headache.
  - Sometimes one of the group will say something like that and all of a sudden there is silence. When this happens, Bob could well begin to think that perhaps he shouldn't have said anything or that maybe these people don't care about his headache
  - Another thing that often happens is that as they take up Bob's request, someone else will begin to pray about a totally different subject (e.g., missionaries). What does a missionary have to do with Bob's headache?
  - What should happen is that the whole group begins to "converse" with the Lord about Bob's headache. Just like in any conversation, you don't "plan out" what you're going to say, you just key off of one another. And the group follows their own heart as well as the supernatural leading of the Holy Spirit.

It might go like this:

- John: "Lord, in the name of Jesus I come against that headache. I pray that you will deliver Bob from the grip of this headache."
- Mary: "I believe that you're showing me there is a lot of tension in the back of Bob's head. And so I pray for that tension to be relaxed, released. Relax those nerves and muscles."
- Tom: "Lord, I believe that you are revealing to me that there are some things going on at Bob's work that are causing that tension. I want to pray for those things at work that You will take control of them and protect Bob."
- After this prayer, Bob feels loved, supported, and quite probably healed. He would know that this group stood with him. He may consider the insights shared by the group and pray about them later himself.
- When it appears that they've completed the conversation with God regarding Bob's headache, then the group can begin to converse about the missionaries or whatever else is on their hearts - one subject at a time.
- There is such vitality in centering in and talking to the Lord together like this in a small group. It knits the hearts of the group together.
- Try it. We will experiment with this in our small group today.

Pray for Your Needs - James 5:16 Be honest. Pray for yourself, then others will pray for you. Say "I" when you mean yourself, say "we" when all present should be included.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER IN SMALL GROUPS

Where two or more are gathered in His name, Our Lord has promised to be in the midst of them.

This form of prayer unites people in conversation with each other and with the Lord. It is simple, from the heart and is a beautiful way of drawing people together as they become involved in God’s purposes, in His viewpoint and with each other’s needs. Then, as the circle of their concern widens beyond their own needs, they may be led to pray for family, friends, the church, the nation, and the world.

Here are some guidelines for conducting Conversational Prayer:

1. Be informal. Don’t be stilted. Don’t use unusual or “holy” language — rather, be conversational. Just talk together with the Lord.
2. You don’t have to think up something new to say. Just add to what others are saying. Your heart will know what and when it is appropriate.
3. Pauses sometimes can be good. God can speak to us then.
4. Let the Holy Spirit guide you. Contribute what He shows you or the thoughts which come to you as you seek His direction.
5. Speak in simple sentences. It is better for a person to pray 20 different sentences at 20 different times than to dominate conversational prayer with 20 sentences all at once.
6. At the beginning of the Conversational Prayers session it is often good to begin with praise and thanks. Then, go on to specific prayer requests. Example:

(John prays)                      “Thank You, Lord, for Your presence in our midst.”

(Ruth Prays)                      “I am so grateful, Lord, for what You have been teaching me in our bible discussion time. I really needed to be reminded of Your faithfulness.”

(Bill prays)                        “Lord, I agree. Continue to encourage all of us about how faithful You are.”

(Steve prays)                      “Lord, you know I have had this headache all day.”

(Ann prays)                        “We know You want to release Steve from his headache, Lord. Lay Your healing hand upon him.”

Continue letting the prayer develop naturally. Contribute out of what the Holy Spirit may be showing you or out of whatever impressions you have in your heart.

7. When you have thoroughly talked with the Lord about the first request, then go on to deal with another burden which someone else will bring up. Continue talking to the Lord until all your time is up or until all the interests or concerns of the group have been covered.

Another type of prayer is Fellowship Prayer. Fellowship prayer is **24-HOUR CONTACT** with God..

Paul said in I Thes. 5:17, “Pray without ceasing!”

What did he mean by that?

- To actually use our mouth 24 hours a day talking to God? Most of us probably could not do that.
- To think about God with our mind 24 hours a day? Most of us would have trouble with that too because of the number of things that inhabit our thoughts.
- But if he meant, “keep that communication open 24 hours a day”, then we could probably do that. Remember, that’s basically what prayer is – opening our heart and keeping in touch. If we do that, then all through the day, prayer will be a natural expression.
  - Sometimes it will be out loud (audible)
  - Sometimes we will quietly speak to God without sound
  - Sometimes it’s when the kids are screaming
  - Sometimes it’s when we’re going to the market
  - Sometimes it’s when we’re doing the dishes (“divine services conducted here 3 times per day!”)
  - Sometimes while on our job at work
- Because that line of communication is constantly open
- Illustration: Like a husband and wife, sitting at home for the evening. They may say a few words, and then read their books or the newspaper for a while, and then speak a few more words. They don’t speak continuously, but the line of communication is open. And the topic can be picked right up where they left off and say some more. It’s comfortable. There’s fellowship.
- It’s like we have a two-way radio constantly tuned in to God’s channel which can be activated at the spur of the moment.
- There is a deep fellowship with God that grows out of that kind of prayer life with Him.
- This is not something that just happens automatically. We have to work at it. If we allow there to be times where we go for long periods without real contact, real communication with God, we will lose our close fellowship with Him.

## 44 F.L.C. — EMPOWER: Adopting the Lifestyle

### FELLOWSHIP PRAYER — 24 Hour contact

— *Pray without ceasing.* — I Thessalonians 5:17 (KJV)

- Many expressions
- Just being in the “presence”

### SOME SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES

1. Establish conversation right away each morning

Let your first thoughts upon awakening go out to Him. Give yourself completely to Him anew.

*“Lord Jesus, praise you for this day. I want you to know that I am yours today. Take me, use me, flow Your life through me all this day. Deliver each of us this day from the Evil one as You bless this day to us.”*

2. Drift off into His presence each night

At the close of the day bring your praise and confession to Him. Release the day with both its positives and negatives completely into His hands.

3. Throughout the day let there be many times when you turn to the Lord.

— Let the Lord’s Prayer show us the way

— He is not for “emergencies” only

*That’s why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large. Include everything as you embrace this Godlife, and you’ll get God’s everything. —Mark 11:24 (The Message)*

He wants to share in all of your life all the time.

## Specific Disciplines to Develop

- Establish communication with God right away in the morning. Give yourself to Him; claim His protection and guidance; talk over the day as it begins; let Him give you His plan for the day.
- Drift off into His Presence at the end of the day. Bring your praise to Him; bring your confessions to Him. “Jesus, I haven’t done all the I should have for you today ... (or) I slipped up here and there ... forgive me. Please give me a good rest tonight. I’m so glad you love me and that I belong to you.”
- Throughout the day, talk with God. Not just for “emergencies only” – don’t be the type of Christian who only talks to God when they are in serious trouble. Many Christians think that if they can handle it then they shouldn’t bother God. The Father grieves over that (just like we would with our own children), He loves us so much and wants to share everything in our lives with us.
- The first petition in the Lord’s Prayer was for “daily bread” – the staff of life. How much more basic can you get than that? He wants to share the whole experience of the day with you – eating, shopping, working, help with the kids, etc.
- Mark 11:24 (“The Message” translation) ... “That’s why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large. Include everything as you embrace this God-life, and you’ll get God’s everything.
- Yes, He wants to share in all your life, all that time. That’s what Prayer is all about!

## 44 F.L.C. — EMPOWER: Adopting the Lifestyle

### FELLOWSHIP PRAYER — 24 Hour contact

— *Pray without ceasing.* — I Thessalonians 5:17 (KJV)

- Many expressions
- Just being in the “presence”

#### SOME SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES

1. Establish conversation right away each morning

Let your first thoughts upon awakening go out to Him. Give yourself completely to Him anew.

*“Lord Jesus, praise you for this day. I want you to know that I am yours today. Take me, use me, flow Your life through me all this day. Deliver each of us this day from the Evil one as You bless this day to us.”*

2. Drift off into His presence each night

At the close of the day bring your praise and confession to Him. Release the day with both its positives and negatives completely into His hands.

3. Throughout the day let there be many times when you turn to the Lord.

— Let the Lord’s Prayer show us the way

— He is not for “emergencies” only

*That’s why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large. Include everything as you embrace this Godlife, and you’ll get God’s everything. —Mark 11:24 (The Message)*

He wants to share in all of your life all the time.





**FULL LIFE IN CHRIST, Group Facilitator Suggestions**  
**EMPOWER: Adopting the Lifestyle, Session 8**

**FIRST**

1. Let the group share their answers from Question Sheet 7.
2. From here on out, each week without fail, you should go over the feeding sheets which have been turned in and make any helpful comments that are needed before you hand the feeding sheets back at the next session.

**THEN - Discuss**

1. Prayer is a “two way” conversation. Ask each group member what percentage of their time is talking and what percentage is listening?
2. Ask for responses : Is open, verbal prayer hard for you? Why? Were there any insights in tonight’s lesson which might help?

**NOW**

Begin to experiment with “Conversational Prayer.”

- If you feel there is need, go over the suggestions on “Conversational Prayer” in their notes.
- Let each person write down the two things they would most like to share with the Lord if He were sitting there with them.
- Use these as subjects for conversational prayer. Let one member of the group share an area then let the entire group “talk” with the Lord about this topic until it seems to have been well taken care of. Then, let another person share a topic for conversation, and so on.

**ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT TIME**

1. Complete the worksheet for session 8 (tell them the pamphlet “The Simplicity of Prayer” will be necessary background for some of the questions)
2. “Feed Yourself” this week: John 15:1-8.