

# A-Z of Prayer Course

Week 6 of 6 weeks

## Before You Start

This 6-week course will take us on a whistle-stop journey through many aspects of prayer. We'll be guided by Matthew's simple book, *A-Z of Prayer*. You will get most out of this course if you've read the relevant chapters before-hand. However those who haven't will still be able to engage with the material.

Each weekly session is designed to take 70 minutes (ie. 1 hour and 10 minutes), so do make time for this. This allows 10 minutes for discussion on each section, which is not long. So the leader should be mindful of this in leading, prayerfully considering when it's right to move on, or whether it's important to stay a little longer on a particular section.

## Week 6 - Going On in Prayer

In this final session of this 6-week course on prayer, we'll look at the final 4 chapters of *A-Z of Prayer*, and take stock of what we've been discovering.

### Preparation

Before you meet, read chapters W, X, Y, and Z of *A-Z of Prayer*.

### Begin (10 mins)

Ensure that everyone is welcomed. Ask if anyone has any encouraging stories/testimonies to share about their experience of prayer during the course.

After this read Revelation 8:4 and give thanks that God loves our prayers, receiving them in heaven like sweet-smelling incense. Pray that this session will be helpful and that we'll increasingly become a people of prayer.

### Discussion (50 mins - ie. about 10 minutes on each)

#### 1. *W is for Warfare*

One of the main ways that we fight against evil, is through prayer. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. Rather than spending much time discussing the nature of evil, instead focus on the armour God gives us to fight, and especially on prayer. Remind everyone that we're given this armour when we come to Christ, but we need to put it on wear it every day. Do we do this? Then look at vv18-20 and talk about how prayer is a form of spiritual fighting. Is this a new idea for some? What is people's experience of this? Remind everyone that we're all called to be prayer warriors!

#### 2. *X is for eXamen*

This is a form of prayer used by some at the end of the day, to aid reflection, contemplation and spiritual growth. Read Psalm 63:6 and talk about how you pray at the end of the day. Has anyone used, or began using the examen? As we seek to become more and more people committed to prayer, hear some of the prayer practices that people in the group have used, either in the past or even recently as part of this course. Encourage each other to try something new.

#### 3. *Y is for Yearning*

The Bible describes people yearning in prayer, for all sorts of things and situations. Read Romans 8:26 and talk about the 'groanings' of the Spirit. Has anyone ever felt something like this - a deep burden to pray and call out to God? As we seek to be people who walk in the Spirit we should be open to God stirring our hearts and souls to pray with passion and fervour, like David in Ps 61:1. Some are especially called to this, as they seek God, wait for him, and cry out for his kingdom to come.

#### 4. *Z is for Zero*

Read Colossians 4:2 and talk briefly about what it means for Christ-follower's to be 'devoted to prayer' and why this is important. This contrasts sharply with someone who prays zero prayers. Living a prayerless life is the very opposite of what God desires for anyone, for each person is made for relationship with God, a relationship nurtured in prayer. Yet sometimes we find it difficult to pray and we don't consciously pray much. How can we help each other at such times? In this final chapter Matthew refers to some of the negative consequences of a prayerless life and, in contrast, the benefits of being people of prayer. Ask group-members to bring to mind one person known to them, who they'd love to see getting to know Jesus in prayer as they start following him.

### **Pray (10 mins)**

Now get into groups of three and tell the others about the person they'd love to see start following Christ. Pray for this person, that they'll become thirsty for meaning and hope, and begin calling to God in prayer, that soon they'd encounter Christ and discover the joy of following him and of daily conversations with God.

End by standing together, in one big group. Take a few moments to go round, encouraging everyone to offer a short prayer of thanks for something they've discovered about prayer and about the God of prayer, during this course. Then have an open time of prayer, asking people to pray that we'd go on and mature as people of prayer, as the Lord leads us on this great adventure of prayer.