

A-Z of Prayer Course

Week 3 of 6

Week 3 - Going Further in Prayer

This week we'll go further in prayer.

Preparation

Before you meet, read chapters H, I, J, K and L of *A-Z of Prayer*.

Begin (10 mins)

Ensure that everyone is welcomed. Give just a few minutes to one or two questions or reflections people have had, as they've journeyed in prayer since the last session.

After this read Romans 8:28, and give thanks to the Holy Spirit that he helps us in our weakness, helping us to pray, and interceding for us. Ask for his help and guidance as we seek to go further in prayer in this session.

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

1. *H is for Honesty*

Read Psalm 5:3. David talks about laying his requests before God in prayer. What do you make of this simple picture of being honest before God, and exposing our prayers to God? Talk about how you do this. Talk about things like needs, desires and disappointments, as well as achievements, joys and thanksgivings. Then read the prayer of Jabez, in 1 Chronicles 4:10. Note that God answers his honest prayer. What does this prayer tell us not only about Jabez, but about God?

2. *I is for Intercession*

Talk about the picture of an intercessor 'standing in the gap' between God and a person or situation, and ask someone to share how transformation came as God used them as they prayed in this way. Read Romans 8:34 which describes Jesus doing this for us now in heaven. Talk about this, and the honour of joining with Jesus in intercession. So what kind of things can we intercede for? On p.69 Matthew describes a number of ways we can intercede, writing: 'We can speak our prayers. Shout our prayers. Sing our prayers. Draw our prayers. Write down our prayers. Symbolise our prayers. Walk out our prayers. And much more.' Are there some new ways of intercession you can explore in the coming days?

3. *J is for Joyful*

Read Philippians 1:4 and talk about joy being our default setting for prayer. Joy is a state-of-being rather than an emotion (see p.75) and comes from knowing Christ, so spend a few moments pausing and simply giving thanks that the Spirit of Jesus puts joy in our hearts. And ask that God would increase his joy in each of us, so we may exude his joy and pray more joyful prayers.

4. *K is for Kenosis*

Begin this letter by reading aloud p.79 and the first paragraph of p.80, to remind everyone what kenosis is. Read Philippians 2:5-8 and talk about Jesus being our model and how he calls us to live and pray from a place of being emptied of ourselves. How should this affect our prayers?

5. *L is for Liturgy*

When we pray liturgical prayers, we're using the written-down, well-formed prayers of others. Talk about liturgical prayers in the bible (maybe like Phil 2:6-11 that you've just read), as well as the liturgy you use now, and at your church. Then discuss some benefits and pitfalls of using liturgical prayers.

Pray (10 mins)

End in prayer. First spend a few moments, asking the Lord to empty you of yourself. Then, in accordance with Ephesians 5:18 ask him to fill everyone afresh with the Holy Spirit. End by breaking into smaller groups (eg. of three people) and intercede for one or two issues in the world. Don't spend long talking, simply go into prayer, with each one praying for one situation which requires transformation. Stand in the gap and pray, and say a good *Amen* ('I agree') to each other's prayers.