

Why Pray

Bible Study at a Glance:

Prayer is how we interact with God in a loving relationship. He wants us to pray because he wants to be close to us in an intimate relationship. We can pray to ask for things, to give thanks, or to sit quietly before God and contemplate him. All are important, but the driving force behind all of them is to draw near to God in intimacy, and allow him to draw near to us.

(Explain to the Group) = You don't have to read this word for word, but this is the general idea of what to explain before moving on.

- **Q: These are questions to ask the whole group**
 - A: Hopefully the group arrives at most of the answers on their own, but if they don't, redirect the discussion towards these answers, and be sure to tell the group the answers if no one quite got it.

CCC/Verses and quotes to read out loud are in boxes.

- **Q: What are some reasons to pray that you can think of?**
 - A: Some specific things to call out are:
 - To ask God for something we need
 - To give thanks to God
 - To listen to God
 - To just sit in the presence of God (similar to listening to God but emphasizing the humility of sitting quietly before him with a contrite and worshipful heart.

Matthew 7:9-11: "Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him."

- **Q: What is your reaction to this verse? Do you believe it?**
 - A: This is intended to be a challenge to the group. Allow people to share freely. The next question is along the same lines. It may be good to merge the two and ask them both at the same time, or break them up to keep the discussion going.
- **Q: Do you feel like you do this, ask God for what you need? Or do you hold back and only pray for certain things?**
 - A: The idea behind this question is to prompt people to think more deeply about whether there are things they don't ask God for that they should, and that God would be happy to hear. Are they holding back from asking because they think God wouldn't be interested or would just say no.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: *"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."*

- **Q: Why is it important to give thanks to God? Why would it be his will for us to do that?**

- A: *Because it is good for us. It is not benefiting God per se; it's not for his sake that he wants us to give thanks but for our sake. Gratitude reminds us of God's goodness toward us and orients us to humbly remember that every good thing in our life is a gift from God. This helps keep us in a right relationship with God, one of humility and not entitlement.*

Psalms 37:7a: *"Be still before the Lord; wait for him."*

Psalms 46:11: *"Be still and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth."*

- **Q: Why be still before God?**

- A:
 - *Allows us a chance to listen to God. This is an important point to make sure comes out, that part of prayer is to listen to God.*
 - *Similar to giving thanks, being still orients us to be humble before God and to remember that he is God and we are not.*

- **Q: Why does God even care about prayer, if he already knows everything?**

- A: *Because without prayer, there is no relationship. Prayer is when we relate to God on a personal level. God wants to have a loving relationship with us.*

CCC 2565: *"In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is 'the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity . . . with the whole human spirit.' Thus, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him. This communion of life is always possible because, through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ. Prayer is Christian insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ's love.*

(Explain to the Group) The Holy Trinity is love itself. The relationships of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit with one another are ones of complete mutual love. God invites all of us to join into that loving relationship and become a part of it. Prayer is what brings us into the presence of God to be in communion with him.

- **Q: Can you draw any comparisons that would be instructive between prayer and the relationship of a husband and wife, or of two people who are in love, dating each other?**

- *A: Several points can be drawn from this:*

- *The couple loves spending time with each other, it's not a chore for them.*
- *The couple will make sure to deliberately plan to have time together. They'll work actively to find time for each other, despite the many demands in their lives.*
- *The couple grows more and more in love with each other the more time they spend together talking and getting to know each other.*
- *Over many years, the couple starts to become like each other in some respects, knowing how to finish each other's sentences, and so on. We similarly want to become more and more like Christ all the time.*