

Practicals of Prayer

Bible Study at a Glance:

This Bible study is about the where, when and how often of prayer. Prayer requires determination. It is how we communicate with God in a loving relationship. Christ modeled for us on multiple occasions, deliberately taking time to pray in solitude.

(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.

Matthew 14:22-23: *Then he made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.²³ After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone.*

Luke 5:16: *but he would withdraw to deserted places to pray.*

1 Thessalonians 5:17: *Pray without ceasing.*

Matthew 6:16: *But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.*

CCC 2710: *The choice of the time and duration of the prayer arises from a determined will, revealing the secrets of the heart. One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter. One cannot always meditate, but one can always enter into inner prayer, independently of the conditions of health, work, or emotional state. The heart is the place of this quest and encounter, in poverty and in faith.*

- Q: What patterns or insights can you see from the Bible verses here?
 - A: *There are a couple of things to make sure come out in the discussion:*
 - *Solitude - Jesus modeled solitude in terms of where he prayed. He also said to pray in secret, in a closet.*
 - *Always (1 Thessalonians verse) - there is a sense in which we should continually pray, and also a sense in which we deliberately go out of our way, as Jesus did, to pray in solitude (to the extent possible).*
- Q: Considering the quote from the Catechism, what is your experience with praying as a result of a determined will, making time for it, etc.?
 - A: *Allow the group to share openly about their struggles in this area. There are some key points in that paragraph worth discussing, i.e., try to have the group share their thoughts on them:*
 - *Making time to pray*
 - *Firm determination not to give up*
 - *Regardless of how dry it is*
- Q: Do you think it's important to set aside time each day for prayer?
- Q: Do you sometimes feel guilty if you don't pray? And what do you think Jesus would want you to think in those times, versus what might Satan want you to be thinking?

- o A: Jesus does not guilt us into prayer. He invites us into a loving relationship in which prayer is how we interact with him. Satan, on the other hand, uses guilt to push us away from prayer. His objective is to make us feel too guilty to pray. If the feeling we have keeps us from approaching God, it's not a feeling from God. Consider the parable of the Prodigal Son as an example.*
- Q: How do you pray? Where, when? Do you use aides like icons or crucifixes?
- Q: God uses marriage as an image of his relationship with his people. How might your prayer life change if you think of it as communication in a spousal relationship?
 - o A: For example, married couples are happy to see each other. They do not go on dates together out of guilt. They communicate with each other out of love and desire, not obligation.*