

Let's try praying like this...

{#13 – Small Group Prayer}

What's it like?

It's like praying as a community instead of by yourself. It's like mixing together a number of people's thoughts and prayers and having an even richer result. It's like listening and talking to one another and God, too. It's like letting others help you figure out your prayer and God's response to it.

What's it for?

It's for remembering that we don't go through this life alone. It's for getting and giving support to one another. It's for learning from others. It's for knowing – for real – that others are praying for you. It's for practicing praying with and for people you know, so that it's a little easier praying for people you don't know. It's for having others' perspectives on how God might be answering your prayers when you maybe can't see it yourself. It's for having a safe place to pray.

When could I use it?

You can use it whenever you can get a group of folks together to pray.

Where could I use it?

You can use it wherever you can get a group of folks together to pray – either physically or electronically.

How it works...

You get together with a group of people for the main purpose of praying. You want your group bigger than two or three, but no more than eight. It helps if you know each other pretty well – it makes folks more comfortable praying and sharing – but you can do things to break the ice if you don't. Sometimes there's a Bible or book study, too – but sometimes it's good just to pray together, using any method the group agrees upon. Oftentimes it's helpful to have some simple structure, like highs and lows or other questions. Sometimes you just talk and pray for each other. Small group prayer can also be used in conjunction with other types of prayer we have shared.

Try it!

Get a group together. First, listen to each other. Then, pray. Here are a couple of formats to try: you could try good ol' fashioned highs and lows. Each person will share one high (good thing) that has recently happened or that is about to happen. Then, they'll each share one low (bad thing). Make sure you pay attention: you'll be praying for the highs (giving thanks) and lows (asking for help or guidance) for the person next to you. Another format would be to use some "pre-packaged" discussion questions like the ones included below. Once again, each person will end up praying for their neighbor based on that person's responses. Some people may need a little encouragement and some reminders, but don't let them "cop out" of praying for someone else. Other than that, let the prayers flow freely (no critiquing, please).

What did you think?

Learning goal: Prayer is an act of the whole body of Christ together. Our prayers are enriched and strengthened when we pray with others. Also, this is another chance to practice praying out loud in front of and for others.

Small Group prayer questions

1. What things have made your relationship with God stronger this week?
2. When did you feel closest to God?
3. What can you do in the next week to make that relationship stronger?
4. What have you learned or experienced this week that helped you spiritually?
5. How have you shared Christ's love this week, whether in word or in deed?
6. How have you sacrificed for others?
7. What can you do to share and sacrifice more this week?
8. Who or what is at the top of your prayer list lately?

Share some prayers of thanksgiving, encouragement, and requests for guidance.