

Liturgical Prayer: Small Group Guide

Purpose: This guide is designed to help your group explore the beauty and utility of **Liturgical Prayer**, shifting the focus from the pressure of "spontaneous performance" to the beauty of "communal formed prayer."

Welcome & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

- **The "Map" Question:** Have you ever tried to find your way somewhere new without a map or GPS? What happened?
 - **The "First Time" Reaction:** When you think of "written prayer" or "liturgy," what words come to mind? (e.g., boring, traditional, safe, cold, grounding). It's okay to be honest!
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Opening Discussion (15 minutes)

- In the video, C.S. Lewis distinguishes between the "Ocean" (personal experience) and the "Map" (theology/liturgy). How have you relied too much on one or the other in your spiritual life?
 - Dallas Willard defines prayer as "talking to God about what we are doing together." How can using someone else's written words actually help you talk to God more honestly?
 - Do you ever feel the "burden of originality" in prayer—the feeling that you have to come up with new, impressive things to say to God? How does that impact your desire to pray?
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Key Insights (20 minutes)

- **The Stability of the Map:** Why is it helpful to have a "map" of prayer when you are going through a difficult season or a time of emotional dryness?
- **Prayers Wiser Than We Are:** Think about the things you usually pray for. Now think about the Lord's Prayer or a traditional liturgy. What topics does the liturgy include that you usually leave out?
- **The "Christ-Mask":** Discuss the idea of "pretending" in prayer—using words that feel "bigger" than your current faith. Does it feel like "fake" prayer to you, or can you see how it might be "formational" prayer?
- **Joining the Story:** How does it change your perspective to know that when you pray a Psalm or a Liturgy, you are joining millions of other Christians who are saying those exact same words today?

Practice Together: Praying the Psalms (20 minutes)

- **Group Exercise:** Go through the Liturgy For Morning Prayer (separate doc. found in this module). Go around in a circle having each person read the next section.
- **Debrief:**
 - What was it like to let the words of the Liturgy do the "work" of the prayer for you?
 - Did you feel a sense of relief in not having to invent your own words?

Application and Closing (10 minutes)

- **The "God" Meeting:** This week, try finding one written prayer (a Psalm, a prayer from a book, or even a classic hymn) and use it as your "map" for three days in a row.
- **The 24-Hour Ruminant:** Pick one line from a liturgy (like "Lord, have mercy") and let it be your background track for an entire day.

Closing Prayer: Father, thank You for the saints who have gone before us and left us a map. Thank You that we don't have to be original to be heard. As we go into our week, help us to join the great conversation of Your Church. Amen.