

The Lord's Prayer: Small Group Guide

Purpose: This guide facilitates a discussion on **The Lord's Prayer**, moving it from a memorized ritual to a functional scaffold for a deep, daily relationship with God.

Welcome & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

- **The "Memory" Question:** Was the Lord's Prayer a part of your upbringing? Did you say it in school, at church, or before bed? What does the prayer "feel" like to you now—warm, formal, or perhaps a bit empty?
 - **The "Teach Me" Moment:** If you could ask Jesus to teach you one thing about your spiritual life today, what would it be? Why do you think the disciples specifically chose prayer?
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Opening Discussion (15 minutes)

- Dallas Willard defines prayer as "talking to God about what we are doing together." How does the Lord's Prayer facilitate this "togetherness"?
 - Discuss the "Our" in "Our Father." How does it change your prayer life to realize you are never truly praying alone, but always as part of a family?
 - Why do you think we often prefer "grocery list" praying over using a "scaffold" like this? What might happen if we let God set the agenda?
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Key Insights (20 minutes)

- **The Scaffold Concept:** How does the idea of a "scaffold" change the way you view the Lord's Prayer? Does it make it feel more or less restrictive?
- **Wringing the Sweater:** Martin Luther talked about wringing every drop out of each phrase. Pick one phrase (e.g., "Thy Kingdom Come") and discuss what "drops" might come out of that for someone living in your city today.
- **Hallowed be Thy Name:** What does it look like to "hallow" or honor God's name in the middle of a stressful work week or a difficult family situation?
- **The Power of "Daily":** Why does Jesus emphasize "daily" bread rather than "monthly" or "yearly" bread? How does this keep us in a constant rhythm of relationship?

Practice Together: (20 minutes)

- **Group Exercise:** Instead of reciting the prayer in unison, we are going to "expand" it together. The leader will read a line, and then allow 2-3 people to offer a 1-sentence "expansion" of that line.
 - **Leader:** "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name..."
 - *Member A:* "Father, thank You that I am Your child and I don't have to earn Your love today."
 - *Member B:* "Lord, may Your name be honored in my office through the way I treat my staff."
 - **Leader:** "Your kingdom come, Your will be done..."
 - *Member C:* "We ask for Your peace to come to the conflict in our neighborhood..."
- **Debrief:** How did it feel to slow down and "stay" in the phrases? Was it harder or easier than just reciting it?

Application and Closing (10 minutes)

- **The "God" Meeting:** As we've discussed in previous sessions, try scheduling a "meeting with God" this week specifically to use the Lord's Prayer as your scaffold.
- **The One-Line Challenge:** This week, if you find yourself too busy for a full prayer time, pick just one line of the Lord's Prayer and "ruminate" on it for the whole day.

Closing Prayer: "Our Father, thank You for the gift of these words. Thank You that they are a path leading us directly to Your heart. Help us to not just say them, but to live them this week. Let Your kingdom come in us and through us. Amen."