

Praying with and for Others

By Alicia Wong

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read Acts 1:1–14. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What was the situation before they prayed, and who was involved in this time of prayer?

Assignment Two

Read Acts 3:1; 16:22–26. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What situation did the Christians find themselves in? How did God respond to the prayers in Acts 16?

Assignment Three

Read James 4:3. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: Why are some prayers not fulfilled?

Scripture to Memorize

For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them. Matthew 18:20

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand why Christians pray with others and how to pray for others.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

A friend of yours has just invited you to join her at the flag pole on our state's capital to pray for our government. She explains that there will be many believers there and thinks they should regularly gather there to pray.

Would you go? Why or why not? Why do you think this event is about praying together as opposed to praying by yourself?

Why Pray with Others?

Jesus instructs us as Christians to pray alone (Matthew 6:6) as well as to pray with others. Have you ever wondered why we should pray with others or attend prayer meetings?

Read Matthew 18:19–20 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 19. anything. This word in Greek often was used a judicial term. **agree.** Notice this word is used in the same sentence as “anything,” which means that two people have to come to terms on “anything they may ask.”

This verse is commonly misused out of context. God does not fulfill everything requested of Him. Instead, He fulfills requests prayed from a pure heart, with pure motives, and consistent with His character and kingdom purposes.

Discussion Question

After reading the comments above, does this mean God will answer every prayer request every time two or more Christians get together and pray?

The purpose of gathering together is because Jesus wants us to pray together so we can help one another lead a more godly life.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share answers to the following question: Regarding Acts 1:1–14, what was the situation before they prayed, and who was involved in this time of prayer?

Studying the Passage, Matthew 18:19–20

Verse 19. it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. The emphasis is on the fact that Jesus will be present when Christians gather together.

Verse 20. two or three. This does not limit the application to just two or three people. The verse just refers to the fact that there is a gathering. **I am there in their midst.** This term is parallel to the one in verse 19.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share answers to the following questions: Regarding Acts 3:1 and Acts 16:22–26, what situation did the Christians

find themselves in? How did God respond to the prayers?

On Your Own

In the space below, write down at least five people you have prayed with in the last week, month, or year. Did the Lord answer any of your prayer requests the way you had originally hoped He would? Did the Lord surprise you with an answer for your good and His glory?

How Should You Pray?

Read John 14:13–14 and Colossians 4:2 out loud.

Studying the Passage, John 14:13–14

Verse 13. Whatever. Similar to the earlier discussion, God is not going to answer whatever request we ask. Jesus fulfills requests for a specific purpose, “that the Father may be glorified.”

Verse 14. in My name. We pray in Jesus’ name because doing so recognizes who He is, how He saved us, and how He reigns in our lives.

Discussion Question

According to John 14:13–14 and Colossians 4:2, how should we pray?

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week may now share an answer to the following question: Based on James 4:3, why are some prayers not fulfilled?

What Should You Pray for When You Pray with Others?

On Your Own

In the space below, write topics to pray for when you gather with other disciples—based on the Scripture passages. If time is limited, you might split up the list of passages. When the group is finished, share what each person has discovered.

- Ephesians 1:18–20
- Ephesians 3:16–19
- Philippians 1:9–11
- Colossians 1:9
- 2 Thessalonians 3:5
- Philemon 1:6
- James 5:14–15
- Romans 10:1

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Praying together changes attitudes and bonds disciples together in seeking Jesus.

- Jesus encouraged us to pray together as demonstrated in Matthew 18:19–20.
- Paul encouraged us to pray for all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:1–5).
- The disciples, leaders in the church, and other Christ followers gathered together to pray often and are our example (Acts 1:13–14; 3:1; 16:25).

Some church members pray only when they want something from God, but the passages studied in this lesson indicate praying should not be about what we want but about what would glorify God and please Him. Such prayers are motivated by an attitude of gratitude (Colossians 4:2).

Finding time to pray together is not easy, nor is it popular with some circle of church friends, yet Jesus expects us to pray consistently (Acts 1:14). Some spend much more time focusing on social media rather than spending time together praying for one another. Perhaps one way to combine prayer and modern technology would be to use FaceTime, Google chat or Skype in order to pray for and with one another.

Find a person or a group of your friends who may be interested in praying together. Set a time and plan to pray consistently with your group. Use the list you created earlier so you will know what to pray for according to God's will and glory.

Some tips: Be careful when you pray together that you don't pray with the wrong motives (James 4:3) or for things you want God to give to you to bring you pleasure. Be careful not to gossip when sharing prayer requests. Remember to pray for things that will bring God glory and that will please Him.

Follow up Question

Why should you pray with others and what should you pray for with others?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.