



LAUNCH

Pray Together GUIDE

LAUNCH

Gathering 1

PRAY Together

CORPORATE PRAYER

Goal: Look UP and focus on God's greatness and goodness.

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

What is prayer?

Prayer is the pipeline of communication that God initiated with His people.

- **Worship Moment**
- **Psalm**

GUIDED PRAYER

Goal: Quiet yourself and prepare your souls to meet with God.

- **Practice the BREATH Prayer**
 - Inhale- "Spirit of God"
 - Exhale- "Your servant is listening."
- **Reflect on your day with God**
 - Look back over the last 24 hours and notice the fingerprints of God on your day.
 - Where did you see him moving?
 - Thank God for His presence.
- **Find a new prayer posture and talk to God**
 - Try a new posture-kneel, stand, raise your hands, or bow down.
 - In your own words, talk to God about two things:
 - ◇ God, You are great! (Pick a couple character qualities that you appreciate about God)
 - ◇ God, I am looking forward to spending time with you because...

Psalm 21:6

"I give you my praise, O Lord, because you have granted [me] eternal blessings and made me glad with the joy of your presence..."

PERSONAL PRAYER (30 min)

Getting Started

Scripture gives us many examples of prayer and commands us to pray. Yet, we struggle to find time, make time, get quiet, sit still, or even know how to begin. This extended time of prayer will be a stretching experience, but it will not be a waste of time. You are here. God is here. Go spend some time together.

Goals: TALK to God - Practice one method of talking to God in prayer.
LISTEN to God - Practice one method of listening to God in prayer.

Choose one exercise from "Talk to God" and one from "Listen to God" to practice today. Try the others during your chair time.

TALK TO GOD

OPTION 1: Write a Psalm

OPTION 2: Use the PRAY Acrostic as a Guide

OPTION 3: Journal Using Prayer Prompts

LISTEN TO GOD

OPTION 1: Practice Meditation on God's Word

OPTION 2: Practice Holy Reading: Lectio Divina

OPTION 3: Practice the Examen

TALK TO GOD

- **OPTION 1: Write a Psalm**

- Using Psalm 63:1-4 as a guide, talk to God by writing out a prayer in the form of a Psalm.

First read Psalm 63:1-4 as your inspiration:

God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

- **Now let's write a Psalm as your own prayer to God:**

Write the first word that comes into your mind when completing this sentence (The first word. Not the second or third!)

Lord my heart feels _____

- Now write two metaphors or similes about this feeling (e.g. if your word was tired – tired like a runner at the end of a marathon, who needs a drink, a hot bath and a good night's sleep).

Example 1: _____

Example 2: _____

- You've already got the first half of your Psalm; now write how you want God to come into this situation in the form of a prayer.

God, this is who you are _____

God, I need your _____

God, I'm asking you to _____

And here is what I will do in the waiting, _____

- Journaling these Psalms can really help you in praying and in being honest with God about how you feel and what you desire. After you have written your Psalm, use the posture from Psalm 63:4 and lift up your hands as you read your Psalm out loud to the Lord.

- **OPTION 2: Use the PRAY Acrostic as a Guide**

- Here's a simple tool to help you focus your prayers if you are just starting out or need some help in focusing your thoughts and words.
- You can use Philippians 2:1-11 to help guide your prayers or simply work through the prompts below.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- **Praise the Lord!**

- ◇ Start by praising God for His attributes and character or His names. Use Psalm 103 for inspiration.

God, I praise you because you are...

- **Repent**

- ◇ Confess and turn away from sin. See Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:9; Isaiah 30:15 for inspiration.

God I'm sorry for...

- **Ask**

- ◇ Make a request to God to provide for needs. See Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 18:7-8; Philippians 4:6-7 for inspiration.

God please ...

- **Yield**

- ◇ Sit quietly and invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Invite God to transform your heart and the world around you.

See 1 Samuel 3:10 and Psalm 46:10 for inspiration.

God how are you leading me...

- **OPTION 3: Journal Using Prayer Prompts**

- Sometimes our prayers remain all jumbled up when they're in our heads, but as we write them down, they get clearer. Journaling is an amazing way to trace God's movement in your life as you look back at prayers that have been answered along the way. Use some specific prompts to guide your prayers.

- **Prompt 1:**

Write out a scripture passage long-hand. For now, pick a short one like Jeremiah 29:7.

- **Prompt 2:**

Two prayers just about today:

1.

2.

- **Prompt 3:**

Gratitude Prayers

- **Prompt 4:**

Prayers of Confession

- **Prompt 5:**

Prayer for Family and Friends

Name _____

Name _____

Name _____

- **Prompt 6:**
Prayers for my mission field

Where you live	Church leaders and the mission of the church
Where you work	Local issues and leaders
Where you learn	National issues and leaders
Where you play	Other

- **Prompt 7.**
My requests

LISTEN TO GOD

OPTION 1: Practice Meditation on God's Word

- Meditation is a connection with God and His word that is both spiritually nurturing and emotionally healing. Read John 10:1-10. Read slowly and prayerfully through this passage. What stands out? What is God saying to you regarding the qualities of Jesus as the Door?
- A door can be an exit and/or an entrance. Take some time to reflect over your life, seeking to discover how Jesus has been an entrance or exit for you. Take time to list these things and thank Jesus for each one.

Let Jesus remind you what has He been a doorway into?

What has He been a doorway out of?

- One purpose of a door is to provide protection. How would you live differently tomorrow if you knew you were fully protected by Jesus?
- Palms Down / Palms Up.
 - ◇ Place your palms down in front of you as God brings to mind any areas of your life where you feel the fear of being unprotected or exposed. Confess these areas to Him.

- Turn your palms up as a symbol of your desire to receive from the Lord.
- Meditate on the Lord's protection as you ponder the words of John 10:9, "I AM the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved."
- Affirm your identity in Christ by praying, "Because you are the door, I am protected."

- **OPTION 2: Practice Holy Reading: Lectio Divina**

- Lectio Divina began in religious communities in ancient times. Its purpose: to pray scripture, entering into its message personally, thereby opening new channels to God's transforming presence.
- Ephesians 5:8-14.

- ♦ **READ** – Read the passage slowly and gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for God's "still, small voice" to focus you on a word or phrase that's particularly relevant to your life. What word or phrase is the Spirit focusing you on?

- ♦ **REPEAT** – Take that word or phrase and slowly repeat it to yourself – allow it to interact with your inner world of concerns, ideas, memories. What is God saying to you?

- ♦ **PRAY** – Interact with God and ask Him to begin to transform you with this insight that He gave you through His word.

- ♦ **READ** – Return to the text and read it again several times and savor the context of the word or phrase that God gave to you. Is God giving you any additional insight?

- ♦ **I WILL** – What is a next step you could take as a result of this insight?

- **OPTION 3: Practice the Examen**

- Over 400 years ago, St. Ignatius Loyola created the first version of what has come to be known as the Daily Examen: a prayer practice best used at the end of the day to spark reflection around God's activity in your life that day. Practice it now and use it before bed in the coming weeks. For each of these questions, ask the Spirit of God to bring to mind where you have intersected with Him over the past 24 hours.

1. What am I thankful for? Remember the small pleasures of the last day, the 1000 gifts from God you received. As you remember these small blessings, take a moment to thank him for his undeserved kindness.

2. What are my habits? Search for any patterns, both good or bad, that repeat each day. Ask: are they contributing to God's mission or distracting from it?

3. Where did I miss you? Looking back at your day, where did you fail to respond to God's voice or an occasion to show his love and generosity? Don't dwell here, just identify these moments, receive grace, and move on.

4. Where did I join you? Looking back, where did you choose to partner with God in his mission? Where did you demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit?

5. Surrender to Jesus in Confession and Celebration. Imagine yourself sitting next to him and reflecting on your day. Allow yourself to feel sorrow for the shortcomings and joy in the victories. Ask the Lord to make you more aware of his presence and responsive to his leading.

Transition to Debrief:

- Jot down your final thoughts and gather with your LAUNCH Lead and classmates for a final debrief. Go ahead and use the restroom or grab a drink if you need to.

DEBRIEF TOGETHER

With your LAUNCH Class

- How did your expectations of this Gathering compare with the actual experience?
- What did you learn about God? About yourself?
- Now what? What will you do as a result of this experience?

Colossians 1:9-13

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.