



## study questions

Use these questions in your community group time to dig deeper and discover how you can apply today's message to everyday life.



### INTRODUCTION

Prayer is a very popular subject today. It shows up on the cover of magazines and blog pages. Even science journals reveal ongoing medical and psychological studies on prayer. It's a topic promoted and considered by the pop "prophets" of our time – the daytime talk show host. All of that is not Christian or biblical prayer of course. But the urge to know if there is a reality to prayer points to a basic human reality: If there is a God, pretty much everybody would sure like to connect with him!

In "The Lord's Prayer," Jesus is tapping into that real condition of all people. When looked at closely, we realize it's not an impersonal "Lord's Prayer" or formula for getting what we need from God. It's not currency, but more of an invitation. As Jesus' words in Matthew 6 begin to wash over us, we begin to realize it's more of a model, or an outstretched hand, than a wonkish policy paper from the administration in the kingdom of God.

It's a relief and it's intriguing. It tickles that sense – "There must be *somebody* out there. It would be great if I could connect with him." Good news: Jesus prays the way to just that.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In three words or less, how would you describe your prayer life over time?
2. Eminent super Christian thinker, Dr. Tom Wright, makes this very everyman observation about himself and all of us: "To be frank, for many people it is not just a mystery but a puzzle. They know they ought to do it but they aren't quite sure how."  
-- Is that your experience with prayer?
3. **Read Matthew 6:7-15 together.**
  - a. What do you find most encouraging about Jesus teaching us how he prays?
  - b. What is most challenging about Jesus' teaching on prayer?
  - c. In the first half of the prayer, about addressing God for who he is, which phrase resonates with you the most (**v. 9-10**)?
  - d. As Jesus moves into what we might call the "requests" section of the prayer, what connects with your life the most (**v. 11-13**)?
  - e. What do you make of **v. 14-15**? Are they simply an elaboration on "forgive our debts" or something more?
4. Jesus is still praying and he's praying for you. **Read Romans 8:14-17 together.** What does it say about your prayers, and your prayer life?
5. **How about Hebrews 4:14-16?** If Jesus is that "high priest," what does that tell you about your relationship and connection with your heavenly Father?
6. How can your group help you by praying for your praying? Is there something specific in your relationship to your heavenly Father that you'd like your friends to pray for?

### MOVING FORWARD

Jesus wants you to know he's praying for you, and wants you to converse back. That's because, if we believe the truth about him and love him, we are connected in a family relationship with him. And if that's true, we really are family to each other too. How can your Jesus-following sisters and brothers pray for a break-through this week in your relationship with your heavenly Father?

### PRAYER

**"...pray: 'Our Father in heaven... Matthew 6:9**