



Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. Luke 5:16 (NIV)

- Prayer was the **life-support** system for Jesus.

#### **Why we avoid prayer:**

- We're unsure God will **answer** our prayers.

- We're unsure that we know **how to pray**.

Ask **boldly, believing**, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open. James 1:6-8 (MSG)

- We get **bored** praying.

- We think our requests are **too small** to bother God.

When Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his followers to pray." Luke 11:1

#### **Barriers to address:**

- People think they need to have the **right words** to say.

If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He (the Spirit) does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. Romans 8:26 (MSG)

- People think they have to say it the **right way**.

- People think they need to pray for a **long time**.

When you pray, **don't babble on and on** as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered only by repeating their words again and again. Matthew 6:7

#### **The kind of Prayer that God wants is this:**

- God wants our prayers to be **honest**.

God's there, listening for all who pray, for all who pray and mean it. Psalm 145:18

Hannah continued to pray to the LORD for a long time, and Eli (the Priest) watched her lips. She was praying silently; her lips were moving, but she made no sound. So Eli thought that she was drunk, and he said to her, "Stop making a drunken show of yourself Stop your drinking and sober up!" "No, I'm not drunk, sir," she answered. "I haven't been drinking! I am desperate, and I have been praying, pouring out my troubles to the LORD. 1 Sam 1:12-15

When I told you my troubles, you answered my prayers. Ps 119:26

- God wants our **communication** with him to improve.

Come close to God, and God will come close to you. James 4:8

- God wants prayer to show our **faith** in God.

The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. James 5:16 (NLT)  
But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. James 1:6 (NLT)

#### **Changing our perspective on prayer:**

- God loves for me to talk with Him about **everything**.

"The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who reverence him."

Psalm 103:13 (NLT)

"We can be confident in approaching God, knowing that he listens to us whenever we ask him for anything according to his will. And since we know that he hears us when we make our requests, then we can be sure that he will answer us." 1 John 5:14-15

#### **Action Step:** Make time to **Call Home**.

- God listens to prayers that are **sincere** and **simple**.

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they've received their reward in full. Instead, when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep babbling on and on like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." Matthew 6:5-8 (NIV)

Let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith . . ." Hebrews 10:22 (TEV)

#### **Action Step:** Remove distractions and be **present** with God.

- God wants to show His grace by **answering** prayers.

"Call to me and I will answer you. I will show you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own." Jeremiah 33:3 (MSG)

"If you, being imperfect and sinful parents know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him?" Matthew 7:11 (NLT)

#### **Action Step:** Anticipate a **response** from God.

- God longs to be **close** to me.

"The Lord waits for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion." Isaiah 30:18 (NLT)

#### **Action Step:** Do something that brings you **closer** to God.



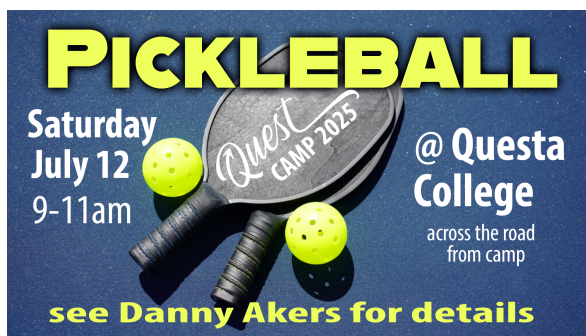
#### **Questions that can be used in Connection Groups:**

*These questions also work well for personal time with God.*

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain.
- How is your prayer life?
- What are some barriers that you experience with prayer in your life?
- What does it mean for our prayers to be honest? Why is that important?
- How does prayer improve our communication with God?
- How does faith get expressed in my prayers?
- Do you understand that as God's child, your heavenly Father looks forward to talking with you about anything? How can that change our perspective on prayer?
- How can sincere and simple prayers change how we feel about prayer?
- When you pray, do you anticipate God's response?
- What does it mean to be close to God? How do our prayers bring us close to God?

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