

Effective Prayer Strategies

Praying in small groups has a reputation for being challenging. Some find it intimidating to pray out loud and others grow restless when one person prays for a long time. Corporate prayer, however, was designed to be a powerful, intimate experience and effective prayer strategies can help your group grow closer.

Talk to God, not the people in the room

Challenge the group to block out other people and imagine talking just to God. Often prayer is a method for telling people in the group what is going on, while hoping God is listening. By talking just to Him, the members will be less concerned with how they sound to others.

Pray short prayers

God does not need reminders, lengthy details or flowery dialogue to hear from us. Consider these simple, concise prayers: “Father, help me deal with _____.” “Give me wisdom to know how to handle _____.” “Please heal _____.” Praying short prayers eliminates the pressure to sound spiritual and helps those that are intimidated to pray out loud.

Pray one topic at a time

After one person prays a short prayer, pause and see if anyone else has a short prayer related to the same topic. Allow as many people who want to pray on that topic to speak and then naturally move to a different topic. Here is an example of four different people praying:

FIRST TOPIC:

“Father, please help Jane to forgive John.”

“Yes, God, give her the courage to lay down her hurt and give it to You.”

“Give Jane eyes to see how YOU see John. Give her love for him.”

“Please heal the pain in Jane’s heart and help her move on.”

Then move on to the NEXT TOPIC and follow the same rhythm.

The Holy Spirit will guide the group to cover one topic in many different ways. Group members are encouraged as they listen to multiple people pray for their issue. And the topics will naturally flow from one to another.

Agree in your heart with others who are praying out loud

Listening to others pray, while silently agreeing with them, keeps our minds from wandering and helps each member to stay engaged. Challenge your group to develop this discipline.