

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION & SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

—This is the start of a new series of studies about prayer. There’s another bulletin insert with the heading, “Personal Prayer Profile: A Confidential Inventory of My Prayer Life.” This is something that might initiate some discussion within your family, among those in your small group, or between you and a friend. It’s simply a tool to help us evaluate our prayer habits and it’s intended to be a positive way to encourage us to become more effective in prayer.

—**These initial questions are designed to stimulate our thinking in order to encourage some personal discussions about the priority of prayer.**

- 1) How honest & open should we be when we pray? (Is it okay to ask God why things are the way they are? Is it okay to tell God we are frustrated or disappointed?)
- 2) Is it appropriate or acceptable to pray for things that make life comfortable?
- 3) Are spoken prayers any better (or worse) than silent prayers? Does God care how we pray, when we pray, or where we pray?
- 4) Is there a conflict between praying “Your will be done” and asking God for something that requires us to trust Him to do something big?

—**Here are some ideas and questions that parents might want to use to talk to their children about prayer.**

—It’s beneficial for parents to model for your children an easy and comfortable way to simply talk to God as if they’re talking to a friend. A sense of reverence and respect is important, but it’s also valuable to recognize that they can talk to God just as they’d talk to anyone else. Help them understand that they can tell God about their day, express their fears, and even be a little mad when they’re upset.

—Another important idea to explain to them is that there’s nothing too big—or too small—for God. God can help us face the hardest moments in our lives. But God is also there to share in our times of joy and happiness. He is pleased to know how our day went. He enjoys hearing about things that made us smile. And obviously, our Father in Heaven is always available to hear us ask for His help.

—It’s good to remind our children that God is always there, willing and eager to listen to what we have to say. But as kids grow older their thoughts about prayer will change. There will be times when they aren’t always so sure; sometimes they need proof that prayer makes a difference. As a family, it’s helpful to talk about prayer needs and concerns. It’s also important to remind them that God wants us to pray throughout the day. Finally it’s good to point out answered prayers. With that we can model for them how we thank God for answering our prayers.

—One more suggestion: It might be helpful for us to ask our children how we can pray for them. In addition to this, we might request for them to pray for us—and give them some specific requests that we might have.

—**Discussion questions that relate to various points & applications given within the sermon:**

—1} Jesus (in Matthew 6) & Peter (in 1 Peter 5:5b–7) warned about the problem of personal pride (trying to impress one another with our righteous actions & prayers). How does pride impact our lives? Let’s be open and honest about this. How does pride impact our ability to pray? Why is it important to recognize that God is opposed to those who are proud?

—2} Prayer **RE-DIRECTS** my **ATTENTION** toward God and pulls my thoughts away from my **PROBLEMS!**
When have you ever found this to be true?
Why is this an important truth to remember?

—3} Prayer **REVIEWES** God’s **ACCOMPLISHMENTS** and helps me remember that God always **PROVIDES!** Why is it beneficial for us to read biblical accounts of God’s past provisions for people? What is your favorite event describing God’s provisions for His people?

—4} Prayer **RELIEVES** my **ANXIETIES** & provides a sense of **PEACE!**
Read Philippians 4:6–9 and discuss what it teaches us.

—5} Prayer **RENEWS** my **ATTITUDE** & leads me toward a **POSITIVE** perspective! How often do you use prayer to lift your spirits or to help you sleep?