

Session 1: What Prayer Is and Isn't

Session Guide

Teaching Outline

1. Prayer is _____, it's not _____.

Prayer is promise centered, it's not _____.

2. Prayer is _____, it's not _____.

3. Prayer is _____, it's not _____.

Personal Reflection Exercise

Pause: Take a moment to pray and reflect on what you've just learned.

Respond: Spend some time alone (we suggest at least 15 minutes) to work through the following questions at your own pace—either in your personal journal or through the Online Discipleship website.

(1) On a scale of one to ten (ten being best), how would you rate your prayer life? Why?

(2) Based on what you learned from the teaching, how is prayer relational, simple, and powerful? Which of these do you struggle with the most?

(3) In your opinion, how do conversations deepen friendships? What makes them so powerful and essential for authentic relational connections?

(4) Speaking to his disciples, Jesus said, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). Based on this scripture, what is the difference between servant and friend? Why does Jesus now call us "friends"? How does prayer help us to develop our friendship with Jesus?

(5) In the teaching, Chip said, "Left to ourselves, we can make prayer a transaction: did I pray 5 minutes, 7 minutes, or 12 minutes?" What could it look like for you to set personal guidelines/goals for prayer without creating a "transactional" mentality?

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(6) Read the following scripture and answer the questions below:

Jesus said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).

(a) Practically speaking, what does it look like for a person to ask, seek, knock? How is God calling you to personally ask, seek, knock?

(b) In your reading of Matthew 7:7-8, does this mean God will answer all of our prayers in the way we want them answered? Explain why you feel the way you do.

(7) What's keeping your prayer life from being what it should be? What are your personal barriers to a healthy prayer life?

(8) Make a personal prayer goal for the next week and write it here:

Is there anything else you've heard God say? Anything else you need to reflect on through writing?