

## Prayer Ideas:

When planning group prayer times be sure to take into account the length of time it will take to complete and leave time for it in your agenda. This will help to ensure that your group ends on time, respecting everyone's schedules. Depending on the number of people in your group and how comfortable everyone is sharing with each other, asking for prayer requests can take a long time, so be sure to plan for it!

(Adapted from *Small Group Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Encyclopedia of Practical Ideas* edited by Brad Lewis)

### **Leader Led Prayer**

- This approach is useful when the group members do not know each other well.
- Ask the group for prayer requests, and then offer a closing prayer yourself.
- It may be useful to distribute the prayer requests to help the group remember to pray for each other during the week. This can be done by having each person write down requests as they are shared, taking notes yourself and emailing them out to the other members, etc.

### **Volunteer Prayer**

- Once the group knows each other a little better, you can find out who is comfortable praying in front of others by asking for a volunteer to pray for the group.
- You could ask "Would anyone like to close in prayer for us tonight?"

### **Small Group Prayer**

- One way to encourage participation is to break the group into pairs or groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to share prayer requests and pray for each other.
- This approach allows them to focus on praying for each other more specifically

### **Sentence Prayers**

- To focus on a certain topic during prayer, it is sometimes helpful to ask people to complete a short sentence.
- For example, ask everyone to complete a sentence such as "Thank you Lord for..." or "Lord I want to pray for..." or "I praise you Lord for being..."

### **Silent prayer**

- A group of people all lifting their prayers to God together can be very powerful.
- As the leader, ask the group to sit and pray silently for several minutes (or as long as you want)
- Either ask a volunteer to close with a short, auditory prayer at the end of the time, or do it yourself so that everyone knows you're finished.

### **Assisted Silent Prayer**

- In order to help people focus while they pray silently, have the leader read each prayer request aloud and pause briefly to allow the group to pray before moving on to the next item.

### **Prayer Circle**

- Join hands in a circle and ask each person to take a turn praying
- Make sure that silent prayer is an option, have a person who prays silently squeeze the hand of the person next to them when he or she is finished praying

### **Pray Scripture**

- Pray the Lord's Prayer or a Psalm together
- You can do this all together or break up the passage and have each person read a part
- Some people find it easier to pray aloud when it is scripted in this manner

### **Open Prayer**

- Designate a person to open the prayer and a person to close

- Anyone can offer up a prayer or prayers at any time
- Don't rush or be nervous because of short periods of silence

### **Domino Prayer**

- Have each person pray for the person to the right or left of them
- If someone chooses to pray silently, have him or her say Amen at the end of the prayer to signal the next person's turn

### **Musical prayer**

- Sing a hymn or the Doxology together

### **Planned prayer**

- Read from a book of prayers
- You can give each person a copy to follow along while someone reads, or have them sit with their eyes closed and focus on the words while you read them

### **Ending Prayer**

- Ask the group to gather in a circle
- Have each group member, one at a time, stand or kneel in the center of the circle while the other group members pray for him or her

### **Wrap-Up Prayer:**

(20 minutes)

Have each group member spend some time in silence, thinking about his or her life, concerns, needs, hopes, joys, etc. Then, after reflecting, have them write their name and one or two requests or praises on an index card. Put all the index cards into a hat and pass it around, having each member draw someone else's card. Once all the cards are distributed spend some time silently praying for each other. It might be helpful to ask for a volunteer to close the prayer after a certain period of time, or you can do this yourself. Have each person take the index card with them and commit to keeping it somewhere confidential, but where they'll be reminded to pray frequently.

### **Prayer Journal**

Keeping a journal of your group's prayer requests can be a great way to track what God is doing as you pray. Get a notebook and write down prayer requests as members of your group share them. Share the requests with the group so that everyone can pray during the week. At your next meeting, remind people of what they asked for prayer for and ask them for an update. Record praises and continued requests in your notebook. This gives you a chance to hear not only what group members are praying for, but also how those requests are being answered.