

Icebreaker

Have you ever been involved in or seen firsthand an answer to a specific prayer? Tell us about the experience. What happened, when, and were you convinced God would answer the prayer, as he did?

Opening Prayer

God, you make life possible; thank you for being patient with us as we struggle. We don't always know what we want, and we rarely know what's good for us. Please help us during this study to learn more about communicating with you. How can prayer be more effective, powerful, and meaningful in our spiritual life? We ask on behalf of Jesus Christ, your Son, amen.

Open It

1. Are there people you can not seem to communicate with, no matter how you try? Explain
2. What are the bare essentials of communication? Describe the elements and why each one is important to good communication.
3. How do you know when someone connects with you? What are the signs?
4. One of the seven habits of highly effective people is to seek first to understand before you are understood. How do you think this might influence our communication with others? How about with God?
5. What are the essential elements involved in prayer? How do they relate to what we've talked about regarding good communication?

Explore It

1. Are "relationship" and "communication" necessary elements of prayer? Why do you think so?
2. Why is it important to be humble when approaching God?
3. Based on your understanding of prayer, how do you define it?
4. What do you think is prayer's purpose, especially if God already knows what we will say to Him or ask of Him?
5. What happens when you confess sin? Is confession connected to prayer, and if so, how?

In the book of [James, the 5th chapter](#), we are encouraged to pray. Please read this before going on.

¹³ Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Is any one of you sick? He should call the church elders to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

¹⁷ Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again, he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.¹

¹ *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

Get It

1. In James 5:13, “in trouble” means suffering ill. It’s not a call to pray only when there is trouble, but we should always pray. Is it hard for you to pray all the time, regardless of the circumstances? Why is that? Why do you think it’s so hard for us to pray more?
2. In James 5:14, the Greek word for sick here means “to be weak,” so this is not limited to physical illness. The Greek for the anointing of oil here comes from the base word “anoint” or *aleipsantes* (“rub with oil”), not *χηριοσ* or (“ceremonially anoint”).² James here refers to the common practice of using oil to bestow honor, refreshment, and grooming”. Does this add any enlightenment to this section of scripture? What does it mean for you now? How might it apply in your own life? Use observation, interpretation, and application to discover the essence here.
3. In James 5:15, God gives us a promise – what is it? How might what we learned in question 2 above affect understanding this promise?
4. If we confess our sins one to another, we will be spiritually healed, according to James 5:16. Does this work for you? Does confession help restore you from a weary state to a renewed state? Explain

Apply It -

1. In learning, there is no substitute for firsthand experience. Indeed, prayer is something that we can experience as we learn how to pray more effectively. One of the best ways to learn about prayer is by reading through the Psalms for homework. However, I encourage spending a little time looking at the book of Psalms. Notice the language and how the words carry the thoughts to God. Have each group member pick a short Psalm and read it at the beginning of each group meeting for the next couple of meetings. Study the readings to learn about prayer and read them from the heart.

Closing Prayer - praise reports or items needing prayer - Psalm 70

For the director of music. Of David. A petition.

- ¹ Hasten, O God, to save me;
O LORD, come quickly to help me.
- ² May those who seek my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.
- ³ May those who say to me, “Aha! Aha!”
turn back because of their shame.
- ⁴ But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who love your salvation always say,
“Let God be exalted!”
- ⁵ Yet I am poor and needy;
come quickly to me, O God.
You are my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay.³

² Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

³ *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.