



Small Groups

Small Group Discussion Guide

How to Pray When You Don't Know What to Pray

Philippians 4:6-9

(Discussion Guide by Lisa Smith)

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Difficult times can challenge our relationship with God and our prayer life. Fear, uncertainty, grief, and struggle can make us feel distant from God or lose faith in him. During these times, it can be difficult to keep our conversations with God going, but the Holy Spirit will help us in our weakness, enabling us to connect with God and share our struggles and fears with him, receiving his peace and promises in the process.

Opening Question: What is the last topic you talked about with the Lord?

I. Promises Instead of Panic

Read aloud the passage below.

Philippians 4:4-9 (NIV) “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

1. Apostle Paul begins this passage on prayer with an admonition to rejoice always.

a. Why do you think Paul opened this way?

b. What role can rejoicing play in prayer?

For example, does it change our hearts? Does it change God's heart? Does it allow us to hear more accurately from the Holy Spirit?

c. What can we praise God for in this current difficult COVID-19 crisis?

2. Apostle Paul also exhorts the Philippians to think about the good characteristics of God. What traits of God have you appreciated the most in the past few weeks?

3. What practical steps have helped you cope with feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, negative, or fearful during this stressful time?
4. Have you experienced moments of peace from God during this crisis? Share your story to encourage one another.

II. Presence As Well As Provision

Read aloud the passage below.

Romans 8:26-27 (NLT) “And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will.”

5. Pastor Shawn noted that in prayer we can release control to God.
 - a. How does praying help us release control?
 - b. How do you determine if you’ve really released a situation to God?
6. Releasing control and embracing our weakness can actually increase our intimacy with God. To understand this dynamic, think of helping a needy child or comforting a hurting friend.
 - a. What is it about admitting weakness and asking for help that connects us to others?
 - b. Can you recall a time when you admitted need or weakness to God and felt closer to him? How did he show his love and care for you?
7. Times of struggle, confusion, and fear are great times to press into our relationship with the Holy Spirit and allow him to help us in our weakness.
 - a. How do you invite the Holy Spirit into your prayer times?
 - b. Have you experienced a time when the Holy Spirit interceded for you with “groanings that cannot be expressed in words?” Share what God did in that time and how it ministered to you.
8. Spend some time praising God for his goodness, love, kindness, and tender care toward you. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead your prayers and give you a deep assurance of His presence with you during this challenging time.