



# Personal

## GROUP GUIDE

### OUR FATHER

#### START UP

Prayer is one of those areas of the Christian life we all know something about, but we also know enough to know we have a long way to go to be the kind of prayer people we could be. Jesus' first followers felt this way, too, which is why they asked Him how to pray. They saw something different in the way He connected with God through prayer. So, let's continue the conversation started this weekend as we consult the ultimate prayer expert and think through how we can have a more intimate connection with God.

- If you could take one lesson from a famous expert (like a MasterClass from a chef, writer, sports figure, or director), who would you want to have teach you and why?
- According to recent studies, 4 out of 5 adults in the US claim to have prayed in the past week. Does that number surprise you? Why do you think most people pray or are open to prayer?
- While most people value prayer, it's hard to find anyone who is completely satisfied with his or her prayer life. Why do you think prayer is such a struggle? Is it a struggle for you?

#### DISCUSS TOGETHER

Read **Matthew 6:5-8** together.

- Is Jesus saying it is wrong to pray out loud or in front of others? What point is He making when He says to pray in private?
- In what ways did your upbringing affect the way you think about the "correct" way to pray—the language you use and the time and the place you do it? What were some helpful things you learned? What were some unhelpful things?
- How did Jesus tell us to address God? Why is this a big deal?

Now read **John 1:12** and **Romans 8:15** together.

- What privileges do children enjoy with loving parents that others don't? How does this affect the way you think about praying to God as His adopted children?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to picture God as a loving Father? Why or why not?

Author Paul Miller said, "A praying life feels like our family mealtimes because prayer is all about relationship. It's intimate and hints at eternity. We don't think about communication or words but about whom we are talking with. Prayer is simply the medium through which we experience and connect with God. Oddly enough, many people struggle to learn how to pray because they are focusing on praying, not on God."

- What do you think about Miller's quote? Do you think you over-complicate prayer or think too much about doing it right rather than connecting with God?
- In a moment, we're going to take some time to pray as a group. On a scale of 1–10, how comfortable are you praying in front of other people (with 10 being very comfortable)? Share why you said that number.
- What have you learned about feeling more comfortable with prayer? Has anything you've tried helped you? Share with the group.

#### TAKE AWAY

Take time to pray to God as a group. Consider breaking up into smaller groups of 3-4. As you do, take time to praise God and thank Him for being a loving Father. And ask boldly and expectantly as you bring your needs and requests before Him.