

An aerial photograph of a densely populated city, likely La Paz, Bolivia, nestled in a valley. The city is characterized by a high concentration of buildings with reddish-brown roofs. In the background, a range of large, hazy mountains stretches across the horizon under a cloudy sky. A semi-transparent grey rectangle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the word "PRAYER" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

PRAYER

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This study guide and electronic versions of the videos for this series and the many others produced by Equippers Church can be accessed at www.equipperschurch.com/egroups

HOST'S GUIDE

This study guide is here to help you lead a fun and transformative eGroup study over the next few weeks that will see each person progress and grow. Use this guide, along with the videos and weekly Study Guides, for a life-changing, interactive experience.

BEFORE YOU MEET:

- Ask God to prepare the hearts and minds of the people in your eGroup. Ask Him to show each of you how to apply what you learn to your own heart to see growth and to move forward.
- Preview the video and read through the study guide for that week. Think about what you might answer for each question. Make notes in your study guide if you want to.

SETTING UP:

- Take time before everyone arrives to prepare some snacks to share with everyone, set up the room you will use, check that there are enough seats, and try to create a relaxed and comfortable environment to meet in. You might want to play music quietly to create a relaxed atmosphere when everyone arrives, or move the furniture in your living room to make the space inviting.
- Have a Bible handy for verses that you might want to look up during discussion.

HOW TO HOST YOUR GATHERING AND USE YOUR STUDY GUIDE:

ENGAGE: Welcome each person as they arrive. Spend time chatting, getting to know one another, or just sharing about the week. Your relationships as a group are as important as the time you spend watching the video or in discussion. A relaxed and friendly environment is an easy place to learn and hear from God.

RECAP: After the first session you may wish to spend a bit of time each week recapping how your last seven days has been, inviting members to share any opportunities they had throughout the week to apply what they learned and how their individual activation went.

PRAYER

KEY THOUGHT: This is the main takeaway for the week. You don't have to read it out but can use it as a guide to frame your discussion.

WATCH: After you have spent some time engaging with each other watch the video for the week.

DISCUSS: Read out each question in the study guide, allowing time for everyone to share their thoughts or experiences if they desire.

When a question arises, ask the group for their input, and resist the urge to answer it yourself straight away. Your primary role is to create an environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves and participate, not to provide all the answers to all of their questions. Don't be afraid of silence as participants think of their response to the questions.

Remember, the goal is not necessarily to 'get through' all of the questions. The main priority is for each person to learn and engage in dynamic discussion.

PRAY: Ask the group to pray for each other from week to week, especially about key issues that arise during your discussion time. This is how you begin to build authentic relationship, and encourage spiritual growth within the group.

ACTIVATE: As a group, read out and talk about the action in the study guide for that week. Decide together to commit to doing this action during the week to help you each grow and engage with God individually.



SUGGESTED TIME FRAMES FOR YOUR GATHERING:

ENGAGE: 15 minutes

RECAP: 10 minutes

WATCH: 10 minutes

DISCUSS: 30 minutes

PRAY: 5-10 minutes

ACTIVATE: 5 minutes

(Please note that these are just suggested times, you may wish to take longer in certain areas. However, we do recommend keeping your gathering to a maximum of one and a half hours in consideration of others' time)

KEYS TO A DYNAMIC EGROUP

RELATIONSHIPS: Meaningful, encouraging relationships are the foundation of a dynamic eGroup. Discussion and prayer are important elements of a gathering, but the depth of each part is often dependent upon the depth of the relationships between members.

AVAILABILITY: Building a sense of community within your group requires members to prioritise their relationships with one another. This means being available to listen, care for one another, and meet each other's needs.

MUTUAL RESPECT: Mutual respect is shown when members value others' opinions (even when they disagree) and are careful to never belittle or embarrass others in the group (including their spouses, who may or may not be present).

OPENNESS: A healthy group environment encourages sincerity and transparency. Members treat each other with grace in areas of weakness, allowing each other room to grow.

CONFIDENTIALITY: To develop authenticity and a sense of safety within the group, each member must be able to trust that things discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

PRAYER

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: Group members will share the responsibility of gatherings by using their God-given abilities to serve at each meeting. Some may greet, some may prepare food, some may pray, etc. Ideally, each person should be available to care for one another as needed.

SENSITIVITY: Dynamic eGroups are born when the leader consistently seeks and is responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, following His leading throughout the meeting as opposed to sticking to the “agenda”. This is especially important during the discussion and prayer time.

FUN!

Dynamic gatherings take the time to have fun! Create an atmosphere for fun, and be willing to laugh at yourself every now and then!



WEEK ONE - PURPOSE OF PRAYER

CONNECT: Spend time connecting with each other

KEY THOUGHT: Prayer is communication with God as a person, to build relationship, unlock power, and access peace.

WATCH: Watch 'Session One' of the video

OPEN

Question 1

Did anything particularly stand out to you from the video?

Question 2

In your experience of prayer, what are a few simple and practical things you've seen prayer do first hand?

Question 3

In the video, Ps Ed and Scott talked about a number of purposes for prayer including building relationship, accessing power, and finding peace.

What is the main reason you pray? Do you identify more with any of the purposes they discussed?

Question 4

What situations, frustrations, or questions do you suppose typically cause people who love God to stop communicating with him through prayer?

STUDY

Read Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

"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."

PRAYER

Question 5

Given that everyone experiences ups and downs to their prayer life, do you think it's actually possible to live in the way Philippians 4:6 describes? Why or why not?

Question 6

Have you experienced the peace of God filling you in response to presenting your needs to Him? Share any stories with the group.

COMMIT

Question 7

Bill Hybels says, "When we work, we work. When we pray, God works". Prayer is how we access the resource of heaven and unlock the prevailing power of God.

Have you ever found yourself falling into the trap of offering prayer as a Christian habit without much meaning or follow through? What helps you to see the significance of prayer?

Question 8

Sometimes we can think of prayer as an obligation and that we 'have to' pray more, rather than we 'get to' pray more.

Have you found yourself thinking this? Why do you think we feel this way, and have you found any tips that help you to keep viewing prayer as a privilege?

PRAY

Thank God for all He has accomplished in response to our prayer and that we have a direct line to communicate with Him.

PRACTICAL

This week be intentional about praying in every situation, to build relationship with God and access His power.



WEEK TWO - POWER OF PRAYER

CONNECT: Spend time connecting with each other

KEY THOUGHT: God has the power to move mountains, but we need to believe it to see change.

WATCH: Watch 'Session Two' of the video

OPEN

Start by discussing anything from the video that particularly stood out to your group.

Question 1

Did anything particularly stand out to you from the video?

Question 2

Ps Ed and Scott talked in the video about praying to our problems instead of praying to God. **When you pray, have you ever found yourself focussing on the challenge you're facing rather than the big God you're praying to?**

Question 3

It's important we persist in prayer until we see the answer or get the faith to overcome, but often we give up too soon. **Think about the way you pray. When do you pray until, and why?**

STUDY

Hebrews 4:14-16 (MSG)

"Now that we know what we have—Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God—let's not let it slip through our fingers. We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all—all but the sin. So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help."

PRAYER

Question 4

How does the invitation from Hebrews 4 encourage you to make bold requests to God?

Question 5

Ps Ed said that depending on our prayer, God may answer 'no', 'slow', 'grow', or 'go'. **When has God answered in a way you didn't expect?**

COMMIT

Question 6

If you knew without a shadow of a doubt that God would move mountains for you, how would you pray?

Question 7

Is there anything you're wishing or hoping for that you should be praying for? Why are you not praying for it already?

PRAY

Pray as a group for any impossible situations your facing.

PRACTICAL

Think about the things you're hoping for and, if you're not already, start the habit of praying for them.



WEEK THREE - PLANNING TO PRAY

CONNECT: Spend time connecting with each other

KEY THOUGHT: Prayer becomes natural when we make it a routine. Jesus teaches us to pray in secret, with sincerity, and to be specific.

WATCH: Watch 'Session Three' of the video

OPEN

Question 1

Did anything particularly stand out to you from the video?

Question 2

Ps Ed and Scott talked about the importance of making prayer a routine.

What are some other things in your routine that you find time to do with impressive regularity?

Question 3

When you make time to pray, what would you say is your primary motivation for doing so? In other words, what is the real reason that you pray?

STUDY

Read Matthew 6:5-8 (NIV)

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Question 4

Matthew 6:6 tells us to pray in private, and Ps Ed and Scott talked more specifically about finding a place to pray.

PRAYER

What's worked for you in your prayer life? Do you have any tips of things you've found help you to find time?

Question 5

Jesus tells us when we pray to not "keep on babbling". Bill Hybels suggests that the two groups of people that tend to pray most sincerely are brand new believers and very mature believers.

How does your personal observations and experiences either support or challenge this?

COMMIT

Question 6

Philippians 4:6 instructs us to let our requests be known to God.

Discuss why a sovereign, omniscient God wants us to be specific when we pray.

Question 7

Scott said in the video that, "being around God will never substitute being alone with God".

What beneficial insights have you gained about yourself and/ or about God when you've been faithful to engage in private prayer?

PRAY

Pray for a bold request you are compelled to make known to God today.

PRACTICAL

This week, evaluate your prayer life and if you need to then find a place to pray in private and make a routine of spending time with God.



WEEK FOUR - PATTERN OF PRAYER

CONNECT: Spend time connecting with each other

KEY THOUGHT: Having a framework for prayer helps us to have a balanced prayer life and make bold requests to God.

WATCH: Watch 'Session Four' of the video

OPEN

Question 1

Did anything particularly stand out to you from the video?

Question 2

How would you describe your current prayer practices?

Question 3

Ps Ed said that one of the signs of unbalanced prayer is finding yourself saying "Please God" a lot.

Have you ever found yourself slipping into this trap? How balanced would you say your prayer is at the moment?

Question 4

The ACTS pattern of prayer is Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

How do you find starting with adoration helps when you pray?

Question 5

Ps Ed said in the video that confession is as much for us as for God, because it opens up relationship again.

How have you found this in your prayer life?

STUDY

Read Matthew 7:7-11 (NIV)

"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. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Question 6

What does Matthew 7 teach us about supplication? How is your perspective on prayer similar or different to what this scripture says?

COMMIT

Question 7

Scott says that having this ACTS framework helps us to approach God with confidence and make bold requests.

How do you feel when you come to God with a request? Why is this?

PRAY

Pray for any specific needs in the group using the ACTS framework.

PRACTICAL

This week take a few moments each day to pray through the ACTS framework with emphasis on a bold request.



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PRAYER

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PRAYER

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