



ENCOUNTER

BLACKHAWK WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

FALL 2020 CURRICULUM PACKET

The Prayer Course: An Eight Week Journey
through the Lord's Prayer

Many of our questions were adapted from The Prayer Course Small Group Study Guide found under Session Resources at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions/>.

Prayer Tools are downloaded from the Toolshed at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed/>.

We've chosen to include here the ones we valued most and thought most relevant to our Blackhawk Church Encounter Women's Bible Study.

Content of The Prayer Course is shared and modifications are made with permission.



Session 1: Why Pray?

"Lord, teach us to pray"

Step One: Read the Bible passages and respond to the prompts.

Luke 11:1-4 ¹One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

²He said to them, "When you pray, say: "'Father,^hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

³Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.^lAnd lead us not into temptation."

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Matthew 6:6-8 ⁶But 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. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Romans 8:26-28 ²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. ²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose.

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Application: In what ways can you apply these verses to your life? Is there: an example to follow, a promise to claim, a command to obey, a praise to offer, a truth to learn, a sin to confess, or a challenge to face?

Step Two: Watch Session 1 video at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions/> and answer questions below. (optional: read chapters 1-2 in *How to Pray* by Pete Greig)

As you watch, jot down notes on what you found interesting or new.

1. What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video (or book)?

2. *What do you find difficult about prayer? What do you find easy? Why do you think prayer can often feel hard?*

Summary Points: We can ask Jesus to help teach us to pray. Prayer is like a toolbox - there are lots of different ways of praying.

- Keep it simple. *"Your prayer life is at its best at its simplest"*
- Keep it real. *"Don't role-play before God"*
- Keep it up. *"Don't give up praying too soon"*

3. *Keep it simple: What do you mostly talk to God about?*

4. *Keep it real: Do you feel like you have to act a certain way before God when you pray? Why or why not?*

5. *Keep it up: Do you find it challenging to persevere in prayer? How can we be encouraged to keep going?*

6. *What are some goals you have as you begin this course? Write them down so that you can revisit them at the end of the course. Share one way you'd like to grow in prayer and your relationship with God over the study.*

Step Three: (optional) Look up Toolshed Resources found at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed>.

(Note: we will include one tool in this packet for each session, but they are all excellent. Check them out for later use.) One Prayer Tool is included below: "How to Pray the Lord's Prayer".

7. *Did you read and/or try any of these tools? How did it go? Do you want to go further in this area?*

8. *Is there anything else you want to share?*

Prayer Tool 1: “How to Pray the Lord’s Prayer”

What? The Lord’s Prayer is the most famous prayer in history, crafted by Jesus himself. This prayer tool will unpack its significance and demonstrate how it can be used as a model and a map.

Why? “To this day I am still nursing myself on the Lord’s Prayer like a child, and am still eating and drinking of it like an old man without getting bored of it.” Martin Luther

“The Lord’s Prayer correctly understood is one of the high roads into the central mystery of Christian salvation and Christian experience.” N.T. Wright

“To cultivate a deeper prayer life all you have to do is say the Lord’s Prayer, but take an hour to do it.” Timothy Jones

Bible reference “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ Matthew 6:9-13

A quick introduction to the Lord’s Prayer When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he crafted a meticulous, memorable, rhyming prototype. The Lord’s Prayer are words we can actually say – and when we repeat these familiar lines, we echo the words of Christ himself, alongside billions of Christians throughout time, all over the world. This prayer given by Jesus can be used in two quite distinct ways:

As a model. The Lord’s Prayer serves as the ultimate prototype. It is a condensed liturgical poem clearly intended for frequent repetition. It teaches us what to pray.

As a map. The Lord’s Prayer guides us as we express the things on our hearts. Each line can be applied and expanded in personal conversation with the Father. It teaches us how to pray.

Do it:

How to pray the Lord’s Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer as a model: knowing what to pray.

It was traditional for rabbinic bands at the time of Jesus to have their own unique creedal prayer. John the Baptist’s followers seem to have had such a prayer because, when Jesus’ disciples asked, ‘Lord teach us to pray,’ they added ‘just as John taught his disciples.’ (Luke 11:1)

They weren’t just asking Jesus for a few good prayer tips. They were also saying ‘We need a statement of faith!’ This makes the Lord’s Prayer the earliest Christian creed, given to us by Jesus himself some three centuries before the Council of Nicaea.

As such, it is our primary doctrinal foundation for life and faith, well worth repeating regularly so that its foundational truths can slowly shape our hearts and our minds.

An easy way to build the Lord's Prayer into your regular routine is to set a daily reminder for midday.

This will be annoying. That's the whole point. It will interrupt your relentless busyness with a reminder to pause and put first things first, to focus for a minute on what you most truly believe.

And this is not a new idea. In fact the didache which was written in the first century AD instructs the first Christians to pray the Lord's Prayer 'three times in the day' – probably mirroring the three fixed times of prayer in the temple, at 9am, midday, and around 6pm.

Understandably, some people worry that mechanical recitation might turn into the kind of 'vain repetition' that Jesus explicitly warns us against, just before he gives the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6. Clearly it's important that we don't recite the Lord's Prayer mindlessly, or treat it superstitiously- but rather use this powerful prayer to shape our lives and earth our beliefs.

The Lord's Prayer as a map: knowing how to pray

The Lord's Prayer is also a map that helps us to pray our own prayers from the heart. When Jesus said, 'this then is how you should pray,' he was telling his disciples to use it more as a guide than a destination.

Many people find prayer difficult. We get distracted and struggle to know what to say. But praying the Lord's Prayer is a simple answer to these problems.

Just its first two words, 'Our Father' prompt us to pause and pray for our families. 'Hallowed be your name' is an invitation to worship. 'Let your Kingdom come' is an opportunity to request help for the particular people, places and situations on our hearts. 'Give us this day our daily bread' invites us to pray about our most practical needs. 'Forgive us our sins' is a challenge to name the ways in which we have sinned.

Prayed in this way, each phrase of the Lord's Prayer becomes an invitation to embark upon our own personal adventures of adoration, petition, intercession, confession and spiritual warfare.



Session 2: Adoration “Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be your name”

Step One: Read the Bible passages and respond to the prompts.

Acts 4:23-31 ²³On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one. ²⁷Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author’s intent?

Psalms 8 ¹LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. ²Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. ³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? ⁵You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. ⁶You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet:

⁷all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, ⁸the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. ⁹LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Application: In what ways can you apply these verses to your life? Is there: an example to follow, a promise to claim, a command to obey, a praise to offer, a truth to learn, a sin to confess, or a challenge to face?

Step Two: Watch Session 2 video at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions/> and answer questions below. (optional: read chapters 3-4 in *How to Pray* by Pete Greig)

As you watch, jot down notes on what you found interesting or new.

1. *What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video (or book)?*

Summary points:

- Start by recognizing God is God.
 - Worship puts things back into perspective.
 - Use P.R.A.Y - Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield.
2. *Why do you think we most often associate prayer with asking, rather than worship and adoration?*

“In commanding us to glorify him, God is inviting us to enjoy him” –C.S. Lewis

3. *Do you enjoy spending time with God? When are the times that prayer feels most enjoyable?*

4. *Pete Greig says that prayer is primarily about relationship with God: “It’s relational, not transactional”. How does this change your perspective of coming to God in prayer?*

5. *In the Acts passage, the early church put their own crisis into perspective by worshipping. What are the practical things you could do this week to foster an attitude of worship in your daily routine?*

In your group, read Psalm 8 out loud together. Then take time to pause and rejoice:

PAUSE: take a moment in silence and invite the Holy Spirit to help you reflect on what you just read.

REJOICE: Group members can speak out short prayers of adoration and thanksgiving.

Step Three: (optional) Look up Toolshed Resources for Session 2 found at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed>.

One Prayer Tool is included below: “How to pray Creatively”.

6. *Did you read and/or try any of these tools? How did it go? Do you want to go further in this area?*

7. *What is one thing you are going to do or change in your life because of this session?*

8. *Is there anything else you want to share?*

Prayer Tool 7: “How to Pray Creatively”

What? Pray doesn't just mean words. This prayer tool will help you to engage creatively in your relationship with God.

Why? “Cast forth the soul in prayer, you meet the effluence of the outer truth, you join with the creative elements giving breath to you” George Meredith

Bible reference: “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” Ephesians 6:18

A quick introduction to Praying Creatively : Made in the image of the Creator Himself, each one of us is an original design, created to reflect in a unique way the glory of God. To be human is to be creative – it is our DNA, one of the main traces of the divine within those fashioned from of the dust of the ground. Therefore it should follow that our expressions of worship to our Creator and Savior will be many and varied. This is exactly what Paul means in Ephesians when he describes the church as the reflector of the ‘manifold wisdom of God’ (Ephesians 3:10). The word manifold here is *poikolos*, meaning ‘wrought in various color’s’. It implies, like the surfaces of a gemstone, the multi-sided reflections of color, light and pattern. Think of the mesmerizing effect of a kaleidoscope and we are getting very close to the real meaning of ‘manifold wisdom.’ If this is how we, as the Church, are to display God’s glory, then it makes sense that our prayer lives should look more like a paint party or rock concert than prayer meetings! How could we ever reduce or limit something as important as prayer to simply words?

Do it:

How to Pray Creatively: Most of us may be familiar with our prayers being formed by liturgy or well developed prayer-rhetoric. Fewer of us feel permission to express our worship in dance, song, art, poetry or a walk in the mountains. Everything from Bach to Bono, from Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel to a toddler’s painted hand-print, from Shakespeare’s poetry to the bad grammar a journal entry. All of this is worship.

The artistic DNA of the divine is a powerful motivating factor for 24-7 Prayer. Since those first prayer rooms back in 1999, we have been watching and celebrating the prayerful artistic license prayer rooms have facilitated.

From songs written in the middle of the night, to poems written by the wise, faithful sages resident in our churches, to the young person’s drawing which reveals their experience of family, to a prophetic word scribed beautifully on a wall, all of these serve us a forceful reminder – ‘surely God is in this place.’ Keep that imaginative right-side of your brain, usually more active in our younger years, alive and kicking. Never stop living out of your imagination. The heavens are not covered by a closed dome of glass. Rather, one world is overlapping with one-another and it’s all much more enchanting than we realize. Bring who you are to God and let it all out.



Session 3: Petition

"Give us this day our daily bread"

Step One: Read the Bible passages and respond to the prompts.

Matthew 7:7-11 ⁷"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If 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!

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Mark 10:46-52 ⁴⁶Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." ⁵⁰Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ⁵¹"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." ⁵²"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage? What questions do you have about the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Application: In what ways can you apply these verses to your life? Is there: an example to follow, a promise to claim, a command to obey, a praise to offer, a truth to learn, a sin to confess, or a challenge to face?

Step Two: Watch Session 3 video at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions> and answer questions below. (optional: read chapter 5 in *How to Pray* by Pete Greig)

As you watch, jot down notes on what you found interesting or new.

1. What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video (or book)?

Summary Points:

- The Father loves to give good gifts.
- Traffic lights: Yes, Wait, No
- Sometimes we need to "stack dominoes" and persevere in prayer.

"Although God knows our need, He does still want us to articulate it to Him." (Remember Bartimaeus)

2. Poppy pointed out that it is often easier to believe that God can change things in our hearts than to believe that our prayers can have an impact on things we can see in the world. Do you agree?

3. *How often do you ask God for what you want as well as what you need?*

Pete uses the traffic light analogy to describe different ways God responds to our prayers:

- Green: Yes
- Amber/yellow: Wait/Persevere
- Red: No

4. *Are you experiencing a green, yellow, or red response to any specific prayers at the moment? How are you responding? Can you share your experience?*

5. *What would you like us to pray about for you?*

Remember 2 principles Pete mentioned:

- Pray incrementally: Pray for a specific next step rather than jumping to the top of the staircase.
- Pray the promises of God: Is there a specific promise that relates to this situation or prayer request?

Step Three: (optional) Look up Toolshed Resources for Session 3 found at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed>.

One Prayer Tool is included below: "Palms up, Palms down".

6. *Did you read and/or try any of these tools? How did it go? Do you want to go further in this area?*

7. *Is there anything else you want to share?*

Prayer Tool 9: “Palms up, Palms down”

What? This prayer tool explains “Palms Up, Palms Down” ; a simple tool to partner with God in prayer.

Why? “To cast our burden upon God, is to rest upon his providence and promise. And if we do so, he will carry us in the arms of his power, as a nurse carries a child; and will strengthen our spirits by his Spirit, so that they shall sustain the trial.” Matthew Henry

Bible reference: “Cast your cares on the Lord, and he will sustain you.” Psalm 55:22

A quick introduction to Palms Up, Palms Down: A simple tool we can use which helps us develop a life of fruitful partnership with God in prayer while simultaneously deepening our trust in His constant care is called ‘palms up, palms down’. The contemplatives referred to this kind of prayer as ‘re-collection’, which is a form of centering prayer. However this tool enables us to remain in ‘the rest of God’ but then to flow into a place of petitioning and asking God. It is particularly useful in the mornings because you can bring your requests, dreams and fears for the impending day, to the Lord.

Do it:

Palms Up, Palms Down: Palms Down: Sit in a comfortable position, not rigid but not slouched either, and invite the presence of God. Begin by placing your hands, palms facing down, on your legs. This ‘palms down’ posture is a symbolic indication that you want to ‘hand over’ your requests to God. As you sit before the Lord, begin to name any worries or anxieties you may have about the day ahead. Speak out your concerns for a meeting you will lead, a family member who is ill, a report you have to give in work, or a person you will need particular grace for!

Remember, don’t pray what you think God wants to hear, pray what is inside you. Whatever is weighing on your heart or on your mind, name it in prayer before God and imagine yourself releasing it on to God. You may even want to picture the hands of your Heavenly Father under your hands, receiving those things you are handing over to Him. As you engage with the presence of God notice any sensation in your body or spirit - perhaps a sense of relief or release – as you surrender to His love and care.

Palms Up: After a number of minutes in silence, turn your hands around, palms facing up, the backs of your hands gently resting on your legs. As you do, begin to ask Jesus for His peace, His courage, His presence, His love or His direct action, in place of the worry, concern, anticipation or request that you had released to the Lord only moments before this. In the quiet, rest in this divine exchange, receiving fresh peace, presence and power in place of the natural concerns and requests. Be open to receive a particular promise from scripture, a sense of direction or an impression in your imagination concerning some of these requests.

Rest: Finally, remain a few more moments without asking for anything. Simply rest in His love, and as you have handed your petitions to God remember He has still got the whole world in His hands. Believe that God is loving you in these moments and allow His presence to be more than enough.



Session 4: Intercession

"Your kingdom come"

Step One: Read the Bible passages and respond to the prompts.

2 Chronicles 7:11-16 ¹¹When Solomon had finished the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the LORD and in his own palace, ¹²the LORD appeared to him at night and said: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices."¹³ "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, ¹⁴if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. ¹⁶I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Exodus 17:8-13 ⁸The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

¹⁰So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹²When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Application: In what ways can you apply these verses to your life? Is there: an example to follow, a promise to claim, a command to obey, a praise to offer, a truth to learn, a sin to confess, or a challenge to face?

Step Two: Watch Session 4 video at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions/> and answer questions below. (optional: read chapter 6 in *How to Pray* by Pete Greig)

As you watch, jot down notes on what you found interesting or new.

1. What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video (or book)?

Summary Points:

1. When God's people intercede, God intervenes.
2. There is power in our free will.
3. Four steps of intercession:
 - i. **Get informed:** Learn the facts by checking the news, or updates about the people you are praying for.
 - ii. **Get inspired:** What is God saying about this? Invite the Holy Spirit to speak into the situations you are interceding for.
 - iii. **Get indignant:** Engage your own heart and allow yourself to think and feel honestly as you pray. Allow things that break God's heart to break yours too.
 - iv. **Get in synch:** Engage together. Pray with other Christians.
2. *How do you feel about intercessory prayer? Do you find it is something that comes naturally, or is it more of a challenge?*

"Our free wills are powerful; they can release or restrict the purposes of God".

3. *How does this affect the way that we come to God in intercessory prayer?*
4. *Have you ever had a feeling that you needed to pray for something or someone? What happened?*

"Praying isn't about trying to get God to say 'amen' to what I want; prayer is about me saying 'amen' to God's will for my life."

5. *What would it look like for you to pray this week with this perspective?*

6. *What could we be interceding about for our community, city, nation, or world? How could we use the four steps noted above?*

Step Three: (optional) Look up Toolshed Resources for Session 4 found at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed>.

One very timely Prayer Tool is included below: "How to Intercede for a Large-Scale Crisis".

7. *Did you read and/or try any of these tools? How did it go? Do you want to go further in this area?*

8. *Is there anything else you want to share?*

9. *For whom or for what are you interceding today? Can we pray along with you?*

Prayer Tool 13: “How to Intercede for a Large-Scale Crisis (the Three P’s)”

What? When faced with the reality of a crisis, this prayer tool will help you to pray in a simple, practical way.

Why? “God does His best work for the world through prayer. God’s greatest glory and man’s highest good are secured by prayer. Prayer forms the godliest men and makes the godliest world.”
E. M. Bounds

Bible reference: “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness...” - 1 Timothy 2:1-27

A Quick introduction to Interceding for a Large-Scale Crisis: It can be helpful to focus our emergency intercessions at times of large-scale crisis on three particular groups:

- i. People afflicted: We ask God to comfort those who suddenly find their lives torn apart by grief, loss, fear and trauma.
- ii. Pastors and Priests: We ask God to give courage to church leaders seeking to bring Christ’s presence and hope in the midst of trauma and profound questions of pain.
- iii. Peacemakers, politicians and police: We ask God to give clarity and wisdom to government agencies and NGOs, blessing and supporting their efforts to bring justice, reconciliation and aid.

Do it:

How to Intercede for a Large-Scale Crisis:

- If you are leading a group - such as a church congregation or a prayer meeting - in intercession for a tragedy in the news, remembering the three Ps will help you to cover the bases.
- You could also make this participatory by inviting people to get into groups of three, and allocate themselves as either A, B or C. Then invite the ‘A’s’ to pray for the people affected, the ‘B’s’ to pray for pastors, and the ‘C’s’ to pray for peacemakers.



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BLACKHAWK WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

REFLECT AND RESPOND WORKSHEET

"All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the [woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

REFLECT: What have you found meaningful in the first four sessions of our study?

RESPOND: How have any new insights into God from the first four sessions changed your thinking or practices around prayer?

What Prayer Tool have you found most helpful? Why?

Which Tool do you want to try in the future?

PRAY: Put your response into a one sentence prayer request.

PLEASE PRAY FOR ME...

Right now, what are you grateful to God for? Has there been an answer to prayer to thank God for?

THANK YOU GOD FOR...



Leader _____ Date _____



Session 5: Unanswered Prayer

"Your will be done"

Step One: Read the Bible passages and respond to the prompts.

Mark 14:32-36 ³²They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." ³⁵Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁶"Abba,^[1] Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Daniel 3:1-18 ¹King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide,^[1] and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. ²He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. ³So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. ⁴Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: ⁵As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." ⁷Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁸At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. ⁹They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live forever! ¹⁰Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone

who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold,¹¹ and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.¹² But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

¹³Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king,¹⁴ and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?¹⁵ Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us^[a] from Your Majesty’s hand.¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author’s intent?

Application: In what ways can you apply these verses to your life? Is there: an example to follow, a promise to claim, a command to obey, a praise to offer, a truth to learn, a sin to confess, or a challenge to face?

Step Two: Watch Session 5 video at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions/> and answer questions below. (optional: read chapter 7 in *How to Pray* by Pete Greig)

As you watch, jot down notes on what you found interesting or new.

1. *What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video (or book)?*

Summary points:

- The Bible is honest about unanswered prayer – we are part of a faith that is all about wrestling.
- God's world, God's war, God's will
- God's silence is not the same as his absence.

2. *How has the reality of unanswered prayer affected your relationship with God?*

3. *Have you ever felt God's silence/absence in seasons of your life and faith? How did you respond?*

Pete says: **"We are part of a faith that is all about wrestling"**.

4. *How do you think we can get better as communities at dealing with the realities and challenges of unanswered prayer?*

5. *Pete says that in the Garden, Jesus “prayed unbiblically” when He asked God to “take the cup from Him”. Do you agree or disagree?*

6. *In the video, Pete quoted a Jewish saying: “God is not a kindly old uncle. He is an earthquake”. What does this mean to you?*

7. *When God doesn’t answer our prayers, Pete says that our faith “fills up”- we grow in faithfulness. Is this true in your experience?*

8. *How can we encourage one another in “faithfulness” as well as “faith”?*

9. *Have you ever had to pray the “prayer of relinquishment”? Would you be willing to share this?*

Step Three: (optional) Look up Toolshed Resources for Session 5 found at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed>.
One Prayer Tool is included below: “How to Lament”.

10. *Did you read and/or try any of these tools? How did it go? Do you want to go further in this area?*

11. *Is there anything else you want to share?*

12. *How can we pray for you today?*

Prayer Tool 16: “How to Lament”

What? Lamenting is prominent in the Bible. This prayer tool will show the significance of using lament scriptures in our own lives.

Why? “I am beginning to see that much of praying is grieving” Henri Nouwen

Bible references: “Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people” Jeremiah 9:1
“Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan” Psalm 55:17

A quick introduction to Lamenting: The most helpful aid to our prayer life during seasons of unanswered prayer, particularly those that bring with them a surge of acute pain, is the genre of Bible passages known as “Lament”. In another Prayer Tool #5, “Praying the Psalms”, the Psalms of Lament are highlighted briefly -and this prayer tool will unpack them further:

Unanswered prayer implies the enduring of some of type of loss which ultimately leads to the processing of grief and disappointment. Hopes and expectations have been unfulfilled, loved ones have been lost, dreams have been smashed. God hasn’t come through as you thought He might. It is here we must remember that pain is not the enemy. Pain is pain. Pain needs to be expressed, for pain that is not expressed can never be transformed, and pain that is not transformed will be transmitted.

The Lament Passages: One of the most under-valued and misunderstood parts of scripture are the lament passages most notable in the Psalms, Job, Jeremiah and Lamentations. Jeremiah expresses gut-wrenching anguish in his own book and through Lamentations. Job faces and experiences many unanswered questions and tormented wrestling. And over one third of the Psalms are full-throated, no-holds barred songs of disappointment and searing pain.

- “This is why I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit. My children are destitute because the enemy has prevailed.” Lamentations 1:16
- “Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God.” Psalm 69: 1-3
- “What did I do to deserve this? ... I expected good but evil showed up. I looked for light but darkness fell. My stomach’s in a constant churning, never settles down. Each day confronts me with more suffering. I walk under a black cloud. The sun is gone. I stand in the congregation and protest. I howl with the jackals” Job 30:24- 29 (The Message)

Do it:

How to Lament : It’s a travesty that many of us have sidelined these passages in our personal devotion and our corporate worship, particularly when they were gifted to us to help us through the many days of disappointment, grief and loss we all inevitably face. The lament passages of Holy Scripture are there to sit with us in our pain. Though it appears all trace of God’s

presence has left, these passages mysteriously convey to us the truth that God is not simply trying to rush us out of our pain but rather first and foremost be with us in it.

He is present with us – experiencing our pain, carrying our sorrows, listening to our rage, understanding our doubts. The Old Testament writers were made of stern stuff. Rather than try to control or ignore the pain, they encourage us to lean towards it, even when it seems like insurmountable grief. They call us to face our grief, express it wholeheartedly in the presence of a Holy God because they know that even though it feels like we have lost our lives, we don't have to lose our souls too.

In his book, *Luminous Dark*, Alain Emerson describes how he processed the death of his beloved wife Lindsay when she was only 23, and unpacks his discovery of the lament passages: "As I look back on those survival days, I remember the newfound appreciation I developed for the integrity and honesty of the scriptures. It was strange to me but I began to experience a kind of holy connection, a recognition that the Bible made space for such outbursts of utter hopelessness and pain. Without rushing me from this place, the words of sacred scripture rested on me and gave voice to my despair."

Don't rush through the Psalms of Lament, even if you are having a good day. Instead allow your soul to be shaped by these holy words so that when the difficult days come, you have a well-developed go-to prayer language to help you through.

If you are in a dark season of unanswered prayer, unsure how to pray or express your anger or disappointment to God, know there is an invitation to bring all that is inside you to the Father. Receive the lament passages of the Bible as a rare treasure helping you speak out holy words when you don't have your own. As you do you will slowly become aware – contrary to how impossible it currently seems – that God can do something with the brokenness of your life beyond what you can imagine. He will turn what seems irreversible into a message of resilient hope. But that resilience will only be formed in us after we have prayed ourselves through the process of pain. That's why the holy laments of the Bible are God's gift to us.



Session 6: Contemplation

"On Earth as it is in Heaven"

Step One: Read the Bible Passages.

For this week's study, we will not use our inductive questions. Instead, enjoy reading slowly and meditating on the following passages - feel free to highlight or circle any words that jump out at you. Then respond to the prompts below.

Psalm 19:1-4a, 14 ¹The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

²Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

³They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.

⁴Yet their voice^[b] goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.....

¹⁴May these words of my mouth and **this meditation of my heart** be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 62:1-8 ¹Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.

²Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.....

⁵Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.

⁶Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.

⁷My salvation and my honor depend on God^[c]; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

⁸Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

Psalm 46:10-11 ¹⁰He says, "**Be still, and know that I am God**; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." ¹¹The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

I Thessalonians 5:16-18 ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷**pray continually**, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 6:1-7 ¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Psalm 1:1-3 ¹Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,
²but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.
³That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.

Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Observation: What thoughts, feelings and impressions did you have as you read these verses? What words or ideas jumped out for you?

Did you see any repeated thoughts or images in these passages?

Application: Are there any changes needed to your prayer life that come to mind as you think about these verses and the subject of contemplation? Is there: an example to follow, a promise to claim, a command to obey, a praise to offer, a truth to learn, a sin to confess, or a challenge to face?

Step Two: Watch Session 6 video at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions/> and answer questions below. (optional: read chapter 8 in *How to Pray* by Pete Greig)

As you watch, jot down notes on what you found interesting or new.

1. *What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video (or book)?*

Summary points:

- Contemplative prayer is silent enjoyment of God's loving presence.
- The contemplation journey has 3 stages:
 - I.Meditation: "Me and God"
 - II.Contemplation: "God and me"
 - III.Communion: "only God"

2. *What is your initial reaction to the practice of contemplation? Does it excite you, scare you, or bore you?*

3. *How would you distinguish contemplative prayer from New Age or Eastern practices (mindless meditation, mindfulness, etc.)?*

4. *Does contemplative prayer make us too inward-focused and keep us from serving others?*

"It's not how much we do, but how much love we put into the actions that we do."

5. *How does this quotation from Mother Teresa challenge our culture's attitude toward social justice or practical action?*

6. *Pete says contemplative prayer is how we "refuel" in order to serve the world. What are your experiences with contemplative prayer? Do you need some refueling in this season?*

7. *It can be difficult to make time to pause and contemplate God. What rhythms could you put in place to grow this type of prayer in your life?*

Step Three: (optional) Look up Toolshed Resources for Session 6 found at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed>.

One Prayer Tool is provided below: "Silent Prayer".

8. *Did you read and/or try any of these tools? How did it go? Do you want to go further in this area?*

9. *Is there anything else you want to share?*

10. *How can we pray for you today?*

Prayer Tool 17: "Silent Prayer"

What? Silence is a challenging practice with power. This prayer tool will unpack practical ways to start practicing silent prayer.

Why? "Before the gospel is a word it is silence." Fredrich Beuchner
"God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer." Mother Teresa

Bible reference: "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

A quick introduction to Silent Prayer: Silence is arguably the most counter-cultural prayer tool. Our world is increasingly becoming one loud reverberating echo-chamber and the fact that silence scares most people more than it appeals to them shows the brokenness of our culture. Jesus' example of going to a solitary place (Luke 4:42) challenges us to actively turn the volume down in our live and internally and externally, encourages us to learn how to be alone with God. For all the benefits of technology, the biggest temptation we face when trying to engage the practice of silence are our mobile phones. The problem of course isn't with the devices themselves but how we use them. Often this is fueled by FOMO – the Fear Of Missing Out. FOMO is one of the main contributing factors to why our world is more riddled with anxiety than ever. Maybe our greatest gift to the world (and to ourselves in the process) is to become a "nonanxious presence." The irony of a FOMO driven culture is that, in reality, we are missing the very thing our souls crave – intimacy with our Maker. Silence can only be fostered through the stubborn refusal of FOMO – by unplugging from the social wilderness.

Do it:

Silent Prayer: **Stop talking.** Discipline yourself to not always have to be saying some words, fixing something, or texting someone. Begin by separating your identity purely from what you do or how you present yourself. You are more than this.

Start Practicing. If you are just starting, set aside 5 minutes of silence every day for a week. Be prepared – the first time it can feel like a week! Finding a particular place where you can do this can be helpful. As the days go by you will undoubtedly feel the benefit: becoming more centered in God's presence; more attuned to His voice, and more aware of how God wants to speak into your circumstances and emotions.

Don't run from the emptiness or emotions that start to arise. Ask God to gently help you process these. As you progress in this, begin to build in longer times and more regular rhythms; include a 'quiet day' once every term where you can be intentionally still, alone and silent. Buy an alarm clock. Setting our phones beside our beds isn't wrong but it is a sign of how dependent we have become upon them. If scrolling our phone is the last thing we do at night and the first thing we do in the morning, it says something. Buy an old school alarm clock and place your phone in a different room. Then, in the quiet moments before you go to sleep become aware of God's presence and His mysterious peace.

When you wake in the morning why not try waiting until you have showered, had your coffee and spent some time with Jesus before you look at your phone? Steal back some of the moments in between the kettle boiling or the toast popping. Or maybe on your morning commute, rather than always glancing at your phone at every red light or traffic jam, simply embrace the silence. Jesus is there.

Leave your device. In his book *The Tech-wise Family*, Andy Crouch suggests a challenging but helpful approach to an appropriate relationship with our devices and a corresponding invitation to silence.

One hour a day, one day a week and one week a year, turn your devices off and find a way to be still. Set your email to an auto-response, turn the TV off at the plug, learn to love that 'airplane mode' option on your phone.



Session 7: Listening

"Give us this day our daily bread"

Step One: Read the Bible passages and respond to the prompts.

1 Samuel 3:1-10 ¹The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

²One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁶Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

John 10: 1- 5 ¹"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his

voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Application: In what ways can you apply these verses to your life? Is there: an example to follow, a promise to claim, a command to obey, a praise to offer, a truth to learn, a sin to confess, or a challenge to face?

Step Two: Watch Session 7 video at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions/> and answer questions below. (optional: read chapter 9 in *How to Pray* by Pete Greig)

As you watch, jot down notes on what you found interesting or new.

1. What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video (or book)?

Summary Points:

- We are designed to walk and talk with God.
 - Slow down, soften up
 - When listening to God, remember ABC: Advice, Bible, Common Sense.
2. *Do you feel like your connection to God's voice is like "wi-fi", "cell phone", or "snail mail"? Do you find it is obvious when God is speaking to you?*

Pete mentioned that we all hear God differently: **"It's okay to hear God the way He has made you"**.

3. *Do you experience God's voice in a specific way? If so, how?*
4. *Pete mentioned that he most often hears from God through the Bible: God's utterly reliable Word to us. He quoted 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness". But Pete said we "**need to learn to listen to the Bible for revelation, not just for education**". We can use the Bible as a "conversation starter" with God. What is the difference between learning from the Bible and listening to it? How has Scripture spoken to you?*
5. *While speaking about listening to the Bible, Pete mentioned four steps:*
- i. *Read it (Familiarization)*
 - ii. *Explore it (Imagination)*
 - iii. *Pray it (Conversation, pray the text)*
 - iv. *Enjoy it (Celebration)*
- How might these ways of engaging in Scripture influence your prayer life?*

6. Pete suggested two ways we can tune into God's voice:
 - a. "Slow down" - What practical actions could you take this week to make time for listening to God?

 - b. "Soften up" - How can we encourage one another to "keep our hearts soft" in the busyness of our daily lives?

7. Are you facing any big decisions or needing a word from God right now? How can the ABC steps Pete mentioned help you?

8. Who do you know who is good at hearing from God or discerning His will? Have you or could you turn to them for advice?

Step Three: (optional) Look up Toolshed Resources for Session 7 found at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed>.

One Prayer Tool is included below: "How to do the Lectio Divina".

9. Did you read and/or try any of these tools? How did it go? Do you want to go further in this area?

10. Is there anything else you want to share?

11. How can we pray for you today?

Prayer Tool 21: "How to do the Lectio Divina"

What? The Lectio Divina is a simple method of praying and meditating on scripture. This prayer tool will show you how to practice it individually, and in a group.

Why? "The Word of Scripture should never stop sounding in your ears and working in you all day long, just like the words of someone you love... Do not ask, "How shall I pass this on?" but, "What does this say to me?" Then ponder this word long in your heart until it has gone right into you and taken possession of you." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Bible reference: "Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night" Psalm 1:1-2

"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." Romans 10:17

A quick introduction to the Lectio Divina : Lectio Divina is a Latin phrase meaning 'divine reading'. This is a form of meditation on the word of God that trains us to listen to His whisper speaking personally to our hearts, allowing His word to become one with us.

Lectio Divina is a reflective and repetitive way to read the Bible, that is not so much focused on becoming informed by the text but rather being transformed by it. It does not replace the other types of Bible reading - rather Lectio Divina adds depth and value to all other forms of Bible reading, facilitating a movement from our hearts to more active ways of wrestling with scripture. Here we are reading purely in the devotional sense - reading for relationship with God more than a type of mental assent to learn more about God. We read the passage not so much as a student seeking to master the subject but as a son receiving a love-letter from a deeply committed and adoring Father. Lectio Divina is therefore rather feeding on what we already know. If we think of a cow chewing on the cud, we are as close to discovering the way of Lectio Divina as we may get: meditating on the scripture, we salivate on a divine word or phrase, tasting and savoring, then regurgitating and savoring some more, before we swallow the word finally into our being, trusting the process of digestion will bring strength and nourishment to our bodies.

Do it:

How to do the Lectio Divina: Lectio Divina is described in four main phases:

1. Lectio: Read and Listen. Bite into the candy bar.
2. Meditatio: Meditate. Explore it. No question is off limits. What did the author mean? How does it make me feel? What does it mean to me?
3. Oratio: Pray and respond. A place of intercession and repentance.
4. Contemplatio: Rest in God's word. A space of silence, resting in God's presence.

However, this can be adapted in different ways. Here, there are six simple steps: Lectio Divina is also an effective and trusted tool to use for group listening and there are also tips under each step on how to facilitate this in a group setting.

1. **Read:** Pick a passage. To begin with, choose any of the Psalms or a passage in one of the Gospels. After inviting the Holy Spirit to come and guide you, read the passage slowly, out loud if you can. Read it twice with one minute of silence in between.

Group: Ask a couple of different people to read the passage with a minute of silence in between.

2. **Relish:** We could use the word 'reflect' here also, but relish describes more what we're aiming for at this stage. Meditating on the passage you have read, savor one word or phrase that you have noticed more than others during your reading. Write this word down and begin pondering what God might be saying to you through this. How is this word speaking to your life?

Group: After a moment of resting in the passage, encourage the group to simply say the word/phrase they noticed – nothing more and nothing less. As they do, simply encourage them to ponder what God might be saying to them or the group (but at this stage no-one speaks out anything more than one word or phrase.)

3. **Re-read** Read the passage one more time.

4. **Respond:** Speak out in prayer what you sense God is saying to you. Tell Him how you feel encouraged, challenged by what He is saying to you and ask that the seed of His word in your heart would develop deep rooted truth that would lead to fruitfulness in your life.

Group: Allow space for people to pray out short prayers, speaking out what God is saying through the particular passage.

5. **Rest :** Simply take some time to allow God to wrap you in His love, and let the word He has given you rest on you

Group: Encourage the group to simply rest in God's presence together.

6. **Resolve:** Finish by articulating one way you might be able to live out the word that has penetrated your heart in your daily life

Group: share with one another how God is speaking to you personally or as a group and what an appropriate response might be. Notice if there are some common threads coming through as people share.



Session 8: Spiritual Warfare

“Deliver us from evil”

Step One: Read the Bible passages and respond to the prompts.

Ephesians 6:10-20 ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author's intent?

Matthew 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." ⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot

against a stone.”⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’^[a]”

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” ¹⁰Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Observation: What observations do you have about this passage: who, what, where, compare/contrast, repeated words, similarities, cause/effect, etc.? What words or ideas jumped out as you read the passage?

Summary: What is the main idea or meaning of this passage? What is the author’s intent?

Application: In what ways can you apply these verses to your life? Is there: an example to follow, a promise to claim, a command to obey, a praise to offer, a truth to learn, a sin to confess, or a challenge to face?

Step Two: Watch Session 8 video at <https://prayercourse.org/sessions/> and answer questions below. (optional: read chapter 11 in *How to Pray* by Pete Greig)

As you watch, jot down notes on what you found interesting or new.

1. What did you find most helpful or challenging in the video (or book)?

Summary Points:

- The Bible is clear that we are in a spiritual battle.
 - Jesus was speaking into a culture of different worldviews.
 - Remember the armor of God.
 - Pray it. Practice it. Preach it.
2. *How do you approach the idea of spiritual warfare? Do you relate to any of the worldviews of the Sadducees, Essenes, or Pharisees that Pete mentioned?*

"There are two equal but opposite errors into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them." -C.S. Lewis

3. *How do you get the balance right between the reality of spiritual warfare and a focus on Jesus?*

"When we pray for God's Kingdom come, it's because it is not automatic...we have to pray it in."

4. *How does this reality affect the way we do spiritual warfare?*

5. *What are the strongholds - greed, arrogance, etc. - in your home, work, or community context? How can you live in the "equal but opposite spirit" this week?*

Step Three: (optional) Look up Toolshed Resources for Session 8 found at <https://prayercourse.org/toolshed>.

One Prayer Tool is included below: "How to Prayer Walk".

6. *Did you read and/or try any of these tools? How did it go? Do you want to go further in this area?*

7. *Is there anything else you want to share?*

8. *How can we pray for you today?*

NOTE: For other ideas about spiritual warfare, check out the Blackhawk Church sermon series "The Invisible Realm" from Summer 2018 at <http://www.blackhawkchurch.org/sundaymessages/>.

Prayer Tool 29: “How to Prayer Walk”

What? Prayer walking is stepping out and praying for your community as you walk. This prayer tool will help you to get started.

Why? “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’” Abraham Kuyper

Bible Reference: “I am giving you every square inch of the land you set your foot on.” Joshua 1:3

A quick introduction to Prayer Walking : One of the most effective forms of spiritual warfare is prayer-walking. Inspired by God’s promise to Joshua, we can walk the victory of Jesus into every part of our neighborhoods, cities and nations. In faith we walk, believing that as the soles of our feet hit the ground, we are appropriating the work of Jesus over the principalities and powers influencing the atmosphere and shaping the narratives of our city. Each step we take in Jesus’ name, we weaken something of the enemy’s grip in the Heavenly realms and subvert the systems of evil and injustice. Prayer walking thrusts us out of our church buildings, forcing us to resist the temptation to stay inward-focused, stirring us to keep the mission front and center. It engages all our senses, rousing us to cry out to God - as we walk with defiant hope into every crack and crevice of our cities. While we walk in victory, and therefore pray in victory, let us remember the way that victory was won - sacrificial, self-emptying, love.

As we prayer-walk, let’s not get so consumed with the forces of darkness and our own adrenaline rush of triumphalism that we get our eyes off Jesus. Let us kneel in our streets in a posture of humility, repentance and unity, and let us declare that Jesus’ sacrifice is more than enough for the redemption of all peoples and places.

Do it:

How to Prayer Walk : This uses WALK as an acronym, and contains 4 simple steps:

W – Worship As you set off walking begin with your eyes on Jesus. Say the name of Jesus; recite a Psalm; hum a worship song; speak quietly in tongues - basically anything that helps declare the Lordship of Jesus over the streets you walk on.

A – Ask Flowing from your worship begin petitioning God for His Spirit to fall on the streets you walk on, the homes, businesses, schools and other churches you walk past. Begin to get specific and pray for people and situations, the ‘people of peace’ you know God has brought you into contact with, who are opening up doors of opportunity for the gospel within your community.

L – Listen As you worship and pray, leave space to listen to what God might want to say to you - then pray that back. Often God may give you promises from scripture or prophetic words and pictures; listen for promises and literally walk these promises all over your community. If you are prayer-walking in twos, listen to one another’s prayers and you will find yourself sparking off one another’s words and thoughts.

K - Know Your Land Get (and keep) yourself informed around the area you are prayer-walking; research some of its history; some of its ongoing problems; so you can pray for breakthrough. Get to know some of the current situations that require persevering prayer and also celebrate the particular graces that rest on the area, asking God to make your area a blessing beyond its borders.



ENCOUNTER

BLACKHAWK WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

REFLECT AND RESPOND WORKSHEET

"All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the [woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

REFLECT: Revisit the goals you set in the first week of this study. How have they gone?

RESPOND: Share one thing you have learned and will take away from this study. How will it help grow your prayer life and relationship with God?

What Prayer Tool have you tried that you have found most helpful? Why?

Which Prayer Tools do you still want to try in the future?

PRAY: Put your response into a one sentence prayer request.

PLEASE PRAY FOR ME...

Right now, what are you grateful to God for? Has there been an answer to prayer to thank God for?

THANK YOU GOD FOR...



Leader _____ Date _____
