

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER GROUP PARTICIPANTS

1. **PRAY.** When the disciples came to Jesus, they didn't ask, "Lord, teach us how to pray," but, "Lord, teach us to pray." They didn't ask to be taught the method or technique of prayer; they didn't ask what to pray about. They wanted to pray by actually praying. Let each person pray (privately or audibly) as he/she is so led.
2. **SHARE YOUR PRAYERS.** You may not have maintained a practice of private prayer, let alone praying audibly in a group. You may feel timid, inadequate and nervous because of inexperience. Confess your feelings honestly without embarrassment. You may pray silently or read a prayer that you have previously written until you feel at home with the rest of the group.
3. **BE THANKFUL FOR GOD'S HELP.** God helps us pray. As St. Paul wrote, "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us."
4. **BE DETERMINED TO PRAY.** Your first attempt to pray may be stammering and faltering, but this needs no apology. Do your best and leave the rest. Believe that next time will be easier and better.
5. **BE NATURAL.** Talk to God as you would your best friend. He is just that. Use language familiar to you. Do not try to sound like the minister giving a pastoral prayer on Sunday morning.
6. **BE BRIEF.** Often a phrase or single sentence is sufficient. "Lord, teach me to pray" is as important a prayer as you can make. Nothing can delight the heart of God more than "Thank you, Father." Intercession in its simplicity is, "Lord, help my friend in need."
7. **SURRENDER YOURSELF AND YOUR NEEDS.** The more completely you can do this, the more it will not be you doing the praying at all, but The Holy Spirit praying through you. Thoughts come and words flow, and you experience the glorious thrill of being a person in God's hands.
8. **HAVE FAITH.** Your continuing prayer can be, "God, in times of doubt and uncertainty, help thou mine unbelief."
9. **KEEP ON PRAYING.** When the going was hard, Jesus commanded His disciples to "watch and pray," and at that moment Jesus Himself kept on praying. We can do no less.