

WEEK 3: Is there a “right” way to pray?



This week, we continue exploring what Jesus said about prayer by focusing on a short passage from the Sermon on the Mount. This passage warns against some of the pitfalls of prayer that we can so easily fall into.



We stay firmly in Jesus' teaching ministry in the Sermon on the mount for this week's primary reading from Matthew 6:5-8

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 secretly, will reward you.

And when you pray, do not keep 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.

Other readings: 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24 (Practical advice from the Apostle Paul about prayer and the spiritual life) or Jeremiah 20.7-18 (Jeremiah struggles with faith and rails against his God)



The first two weeks in this series have examined foundational teachings about prayer. We asked the fundamental question: “What is prayer?” and then turned to Jesus’ pattern for prayer, which we have come to call “The Lord’s Prayer.”

This week, we build upon that foundation as we grapple with more of Jesus’ teachings on prayer.

It is one thing to know that prayer is essential—but *how* should we pray? Is there a “right” and – by extension – a “wrong” way to pray?

Key Themes and Application

This passage majors on avoiding hypocrisy in our spiritual practices. In these verses, Jesus criticises those who pray hypocritically while seeking attention and admiration from others. He encourages *authentic* prayer, which is sincere, humble and not performative. At its core, Jesus challenges us to perceive what truly matters. It encourages us to discern between:

- outward appearances and inner reality
- worldly values and godly values
- human traditions and divine commands.

These themes provide a comprehensive understanding of Jesus’ teachings in this passage, emphasising authentic prayer, trust in God, and prioritising God’s kingdom.

As preachers looking to expound this passage, we should consider the following lessons and interpretations:

1. **Sincerity in Prayer:** We should emphasise the importance of sincerity in prayer. Jesus criticises those who pray to be seen by others, suggesting prayer should be a private and genuine conversation with God. We ought to encourage the congregation to examine their motives when they pray and to strive for authenticity in their relationship with God.
2. **Simplicity in Prayer:** Jesus instructs His followers to avoid vain repetitions and lengthy prayers intended to impress others. The preacher can emphasise the value of simplicity in prayer, reminding the congregation that God values our hearts over the eloquence of our words.
3. **Solitude in Prayer:** Jesus encourages believers to pray in secret. We might highlight the importance of cultivating a personal, private prayer life in addition to corporate prayer. This can serve as a reminder that our relationship with God is personal and not dependent on the approval or recognition of others.
4. **Shunning Hypocrisy:** The passage warns against hypocrisy in prayer. We can challenge the congregation to examine their practices and attitudes in prayer, encouraging them to avoid hypocrisy and strive for sincerity and integrity in their relationship with God.

In Matthew 6:5-8, Christ continues to correct the wrong manner in which the Pharisees and scribes did their acts of righteousness. After addressing the abuse of giving (v. 2-4), he focuses on the abuse of prayer. Though at times done incorrectly, the Jews were known for prayer. William Barclay said:



In Matthew 6:5-8, Christ continues to correct the wrong manner in which the Pharisees and scribes did their acts of righteousness. After addressing the abuse of giving (v. 2-4), he focuses on the abuse of prayer. Though at times done incorrectly, the Jews were known for prayer. William Barclay said:

No nation ever had a higher ideal of prayer than the Jews had; and no religion ever ranked prayer higher in the scale of priorities than the Jews did. 'Great is prayer,' said the Rabbis, 'greater than all good works.' One of the loveliest things that was ever said about family worship is the Rabbinic saying: 'He who prays within his house surrounds it with a wall that is stronger than iron.' The only regret of the Rabbis was that it was not possible to pray all day long.

In addition, Jews had formal prayers for every aspect of life. Barclay adds:

There was prayer before and after each meal; there were prayers in connection with the light, the fire and the lightning, on seeing the new moon, on comets, rain or tempest, at the sight of the sea, lakes or rivers, on receiving good news, on using new furniture, on entering or leaving a city. Everything had its prayer. Clearly, there is something lovely here. It was the intention that every happening in life should be brought into the presence of God.

They also had regular times of prayer. Devout Jews would pray three times a day—9 am, 12 pm, and 3 pm. When the Babylonian public officials wanted to find a way to accuse Daniel, they knew he was vulnerable in his prayer life (Daniel 6:10, cf. Ps 55:17). Even though Jews were known for prayer, there was much confusion and misconceptions about prayer. In Matthew 6:5, Christ describes people who “love to pray” however were praying incorrectly.

It is possible for us to love to pray as well and yet be wrong in how we do it. Christ rebukes the common practices of the religious leaders and instructs his disciples on proper praying. In Matthew 6:-13, he continues to teach on prayer, as he gives a pattern of prayer, often called the Lord's Prayer.

As was true with the Jews, many people today are confused about their prayer life and struggle with it. Even the disciples approached Christ, later in his ministry, about teaching them how to pray in Luke 11. After watching Christ pray, praying with him, and hearing him teach on it, they still struggled with it. And this is true for many of us.

There have been multiple research projects into why many Christians find prayer difficult.

Here is a compilation of factors researchers and theologians have identified—feel free to incorporate one or more of these into your sermon.

1. **Distractions and Busyness:** Many people, Christians included, lead busy lives filled with distractions. Finding time and mental space for prayer can be challenging amidst these distractions.

2. **Lack of Understanding or Experience:** Some Christians may struggle with prayer because they don't fully understand its purpose or how to engage effectively. They may lack experience or guidance in prayer practices.

3. **Spiritual Dryness:** Like any spiritual practice, prayer can have periods of dryness or lack of felt connection. Christians may find it difficult to pray when they feel distant from God or when they don't experience the emotional or spiritual fulfilment they expect.

4. **Guilt or Shame:** Feelings of guilt or shame can hinder prayer. Some Christians may feel unworthy to pray to God due to past mistakes or perceived inadequacies.

5. **Perceived Ineffectiveness:** If someone feels that their prayers are not being answered or that they don't see tangible results, they may become discouraged and find it challenging to continue praying.

6. **Intellectual Doubts or Questions:** Some Christians may struggle with prayer because they have intellectual doubts or theological questions. They may wonder if prayer makes a difference or is just a psychological exercise.

7. **Personal Struggles:** Individual struggles such as depression, anxiety, or grief can make prayer difficult. These struggles can affect one's ability to concentrate, feel connected to God, or engage in meaningful conversation.

8. **Expectations and Pressure:** There may be external pressures or expectations from religious communities or leaders regarding prayer, creating feelings of inadequacy or anxiety.

9. **Cultural or Familial Influences:** Upbringing and cultural background can also play a role. Some individuals may come from families or communities where prayer wasn't emphasised or associated with negative experiences.

10. **Misconceptions about Prayer:** Misunderstandings about prayer, such as viewing it solely as a means to ask for things or expecting instant results, can lead to frustration and difficulty in prayer.

Research in this area often involves understanding these factors through qualitative studies, surveys, interviews, and observations of individual and communal prayer practices among Christians. Additionally, pastoral care and counselling often address these difficulties to help individuals overcome barriers to prayer.



"Prayer is how we press our hands into the invisible and find the hand of Christ reaching back." - *James K. A. Smith*.

"Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness." - *Mahatma Gandhi*.

"Prayer is our best weapon; it is the key to God's heart. You must speak to Jesus not only with your lips but with your heart. In fact, on certain occasions, you should only speak to Him with your heart." *St Francis of Assisi*

"Prayer is not about fixing the world; it is about healing the heart. It is not about changing others; it is about transforming ourselves." *John O'Donohue*

"Let us never forget to pray. God lives. He is near. He is real. He is not only aware of us but cares for us. He is our Father. He is accessible to all who seek Him."—*Gordon B. Hinckley*.

"For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven; it is a cry of recognition and love, embracing both trial and joy." *St Theresa of Lisieux*.

"You pray in your distress and your need; would that you might also pray in the fullness of your joy and your days of abundance." - *Kahlil Gibran*.

"In the silence of the heart, God speaks. If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Then you will know that you are nothing. Only when you realise your nothingness and emptiness can God fill you with Himself. Souls of prayer are souls of great silence." - *Mother Teresa*.

"The power of prayer doesn't come from the words we say, but from the One who hears them." - *Annie Van der Heiden*.



Here's a possible outline for a sermon on Matthew 6:5-8. Again, we always say—this is not prescriptive. You can develop the theme any way you like and with reference to the context and situation. A sermon outline is provided as a "jumping off" point for those who find it helpful to have some inspiration and a few ideas.

Introduction

Briefly introduce the context of Matthew 6:5-8 in the Sermon on the Mount. State the sermon's purpose: to challenge and enrich the congregation's prayer lives.

I. Sincerity in Prayer (Matthew 6:5)

Discuss the importance of sincerity in prayer and share examples of how authenticity in prayer can deepen our relationship with God.

Challenge: Encourage the congregation to examine their motives when they pray.

II Steering clear of Hypocrisy (Matthew 6:5)

Discuss Jesus' warning against hypocrisy in prayer and share examples of how hypocrisy can hinder our relationship with God.

Challenge: Encourage the congregation to strive for sincerity and integrity in their prayers.

III. Solitude in Prayer (Matthew 6:6)

Discuss the value of a personal, private prayer life—and share practical tips for cultivating one.

Challenge: Encourage the congregation to spend time in private prayer this week.

IV. Simplicity in Prayer (Matthew 6:7)

Discuss Jesus' instruction to avoid vain repetitions and lengthy prayers. Share examples of simple, heartfelt prayers in the Bible.

Challenge: Encourage the congregation to embrace simplicity in their prayers.

Practical Application for the Week Ahead

Here are five practical applications you can fold into your sermon or use as a challenge at the end if they seem appropriate. Don't over-egg this—ONE well-made challenge is preferable to hammering them with bags of information they'll forget before they leave church!

- **Set Aside Private Prayer Time:** Encourage the congregation to set aside a specific time each day for private prayer. This could be in the morning before they start their day, during a lunch break, or in the evening before bed. For example, they could set an alarm on their phone to remind them to pray at a specific time each day.
- **Create a Prayer Journal:** Encourage the congregation to start a prayer journal where they can write down their prayers. This can help them focus on their conversation with God and avoid distractions. For example, they could write down specific things they are thankful for or specific requests. (There is more about journalling in last week's resources)
- **Pray in Simplicity:** Encourage the congregation to pray in simple, straightforward language, just as they would talk to a friend. They don't need to use fancy words or long sentences. For example, instead of saying, "Oh, Almighty God, I beseech thee to grant me thy divine favour," they could simply say, "God, I need your help."

- **Silent Prayer:** Encourage the congregation to listen to God's voice in silence. This can be a powerful way to deepen their relationship with God and helpful for those who struggle with prayer because "I never know what to say." For example, they could set a five-minute timer each day and spend that time in silence, focusing on God.
- **Gratitude in Prayer:** Encourage the congregation to start each prayer with gratitude. This can help them focus on the positive and recognise God's blessings. For example, they could say, "Thank you, God, for the beautiful weather today," or "Thank you, God, for my family." Gratitude praying dovetails beautifully with journaling (see above)

Conclusion

Recap the main points of the sermon. Encourage the congregation to apply these lessons to their prayer lives. Close in prayer, modelling the principles discussed in the sermon.

This sermon outline provides ONE WAY of Matthew 6:5-8, offering practical applications for the congregation's prayer life and relationship with God. It is designed to be engaging and challenging, inspiring the congregation to deepen their prayer lives in line with Jesus' teachings.

But there are MANY other ways to handle this text. Feel free to work up your thoughts into a different sermon!



Suggested Hymns and Songs

STF H&P

370	280	Breathe on Me, Breath of God
531	559	What a Friend We Have In Jesus
467	524	I Need Thee Every Hour
	549	Jesus, where'er thy people meet
529	577	Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire
663		I, the Lord of sea and sky
566	705	Take my life and let it be
530		To be in Your presence
545	378	Be Thou My Vision
781		Take, oh take me as I am

Call to Worship

In the quietness of this sacred space,
We gather to praise the Almighty's grace.
With voices lifted high and hearts aflame,
Let us exalt and magnify His name.

**Praise be to God, forever and ever,
His love endures, failing us never.**

From the rising of the sun to its setting,
Let our praises be unceasing, never forgetting.
For He is the source of all that is good and right,
In His presence, we find our true delight.

**Praise be to God, forever and ever,
His love endures, failing us never.**

So let us lift our voices in joyful song,
To the God to whom all praise belongs.
With every breath, with every beat of our heart,
Let us praise Him, never to depart.

**Praise be to God, forever and ever,
His love endures, failing us never**

Prayers of Approach

Almighty God, I come before You today to ask for the gift of honesty.
Help me always to speak the truth, act with integrity,
and be transparent in all my dealings.
May my words and actions reflect Your goodness and righteousness,
May I be a shining example of honesty to those around me.
I ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Dear God, I come before You today
asking for Your guidance towards honesty.
I know that honesty is a virtue that You hold dear,
and I desire to live my life in a way that is pleasing to You.
I ask that You help me to be truthful in all my dealings with others,
to speak the truth at all times,
even when it may be difficult or inconvenient.

Amen

Penitence

For the times we have offered prayers for show,
rather than coming to You with a sincere heart,
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

For the times we have doubted Your care and provision,
failing to trust that You know our needs before we ask,
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

For the times we have complicated our prayers with needless words
or sought the praise of others over humility towards You,
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God who, in His infinite mercy,
grants forgiveness to all who come with open hearts.

May He cleanse you from your sins,
renew your spirit,
and fill you with His grace.

In the love and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Collect

Lord Jesus Christ,
You've shown us that real prayer
is about being honest and humble with you.
Help us to mean what we say when we talk to you,
not just saying things to look good to others.
Remind us that you know what we need even before we ask.
Guide us to keep our prayers simple and from the heart.
Inspired by you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

Intercessions

Dear God, we pray for authenticity in our prayers. Help us to approach you with sincerity, not seeking the approval of others but desiring only your divine communion. May our prayers reflect our true feelings, needs, and desires, and may we find comfort and peace in our honest conversations with you.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for being all-knowing and all-seeing. You know our needs before we voice them, and you care for us in ways we cannot comprehend. Help us trust in your provision and bring our worries and concerns to you in prayer, confident in your love and care for us.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Lord, we ask for the grace to keep our prayers simple and sincere. Help us to communicate with you as we would with a dear friend, using straightforward language and expressing our true feelings. May we remember that you value our hearts' content over our words' eloquence. Amen.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

God, we seek your guidance in cultivating a private prayer life. Help us to set aside time each day for conversation with you, away from the distractions and pressures of the world. May these quiet moments draw us closer to you and deepen our relationship with you.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Father, we pray for sincerity and integrity in our prayers. Help us avoid hypocrisy and be honest in our relationship with you. May our prayers reflect our true selves, and may we strive to live out our faith in our daily lives

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Sending Prayer (Benediction)

May the God of all grace,
Guide you in sincerity and truth.
May He who knows your needs before you ask,
Provide for you and give you peace.
May He who values simplicity,
Help you find joy in the simple blessings of each day.
May He who invites us into private communion,
Draw you closer in your walk with Him.
Go forth this week, living out these truths in your lives.
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen



Prayer Activity: Breathing Prayers

Breathing prayer is a simple spiritual practice that combines deep breathing with prayer or meditative focus. It's about connecting your breath with your spiritual intentions, creating a rhythm that calms the mind and opens the heart to a deeper sense of the divine presence.

How to Begin Breathing Prayer

1. Find a Quiet Space

Choose a place where you won't be disturbed. Sit comfortably with your back straight and shoulders relaxed.

2. Set Your Intention

Decide what you wish to focus on during your breathing prayer: gratitude, peace, forgiveness, or a specific prayer. Be clear about your spiritual intention or the word you want to centre on.

3. Begin with Deep Breaths

Inhale deeply through your nose, filling your lungs. Exhale slowly through your mouth, releasing tension. Repeat this process a few times to settle into a calm state.

4. Integrate Your Prayer

As you inhale, silently say a word or phrase (e.g., "Peace," "Jesus," "Thank You"). As you exhale, release any tension or distractions. Or select a simple, meaningful phrase or scripture (e.g., "Be still and know that I am God"). Repeat it in sync with your breathing: inhale on one part, exhale on the other.

5. Focus on the Present Moment**

Pay attention to the sensation of your breath entering and leaving your body. Let go of past concerns and future worries, focusing solely on the present.

6. Close with Gratitude

End your session by expressing gratitude for the time spent and any insights gained. Take a moment to reflect on how you feel and carry that sense of peace with you.

Additional Tips

- Consistency is key: Aim for regular practice to build a habit.
- Be gentle with yourself: It's okay if your mind wanders; gently bring it back to your breath and prayer.
- Experiment with postures: Try different positions (sitting, standing, lying down) to find what works best for you.

Breathing prayer is a versatile and accessible practice that can deepen your spiritual life and enhance your well-being. You create a serene space for divine connection and inner peace by aligning your breath with your prayers. Start today, and let each breath be a step closer to the sacred.

Prayer Activity: "Old Woman Praying" by Nicolaes Maes

This prayer meditation is based on a painting called "Old Woman Praying" by Nicolaes Maes (c.1656). A high-resolution version, copyright-free, can be downloaded at this URL:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:An_Old_Woman_Praying_-_Nicolaes_Maes.png

You can use this meditation as part of worship—if you can project the image onto a screen, then so much the better. Or it can be printed out and given to people to use at home during the week.

We are in the home of what appears to be an ordinary Dutch woman. There is no sense of the flashy or extravagance of a merchant class member who was extremely wealthy.

Instead, the work speaks to me of simplicity and humility. Her attire is simple, implying that her means are limited.

The table is small, the meal is simple, and the house is modest; all of these things confirm that she has little in the world to comfort her.

The table is set for one, which is particularly poignant.

We can imagine her parents, siblings, beloved husband, and possibly even children who have died or left her behind. Or perhaps there never was a husband or children, and her sadness reflects what might have been.

The pleasure of this simple meal may be all she has left—it may be all of life.

With hands clasped in prayer and her eyes closed, we join the woman in a moment of devotion. We assume it is a prayer of thanksgiving for the meal before her.

But do we hear more than "Thank you for the food" in her prayer?

Looking up at the window, we can see signs that her situation is not as bleak as it may seem.

Although the meal could be all that remains of her material life, an open Bible is on the window sill.

A lamp represents the direction of the One Who Is the Light of the World. The keys imply that she holds the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven in her faith and devotion.

So perhaps we can hear a link between the earthly, material meal that inspires her gratitude and the spiritual power and comfort provided by the God to whom the prayer is offered in her prayer.

The loaf of bread and the jug on the table indicate an even closer relationship. It connects this woman's humble meal to the meal we celebrate today: the meal in which the bread and wine we give thanks for are not just physical sustenance but the body and blood of Christ who sustains us spiritually and in every way, not just for a day, but for all time.

A gentle silence pervades the room as if the outside world has paused in its ever-forward stride to take a collective breath and become still, at least for this moment.

There appears to be no movement here, but if you look to the lower right-hand corner, a naughty and mischievous cat has decided that now is a good time to steal some of the old woman's dinner.

He tugs on the simple tablecloth, trying to bring the food closer to him. It is a wonderfully ordinary action in a moment of devotion. The painting's subtitle is "Prayer without End."

What does this imply for us?

At the very least, it indicates that her devotion is not a passing fad.

One assumes that this has been her habit for most of her life. More importantly, it implies that this prayer may never end—but may become a face-to-face conversation before it does.

Perhaps this woman is nearing the end of her life and eating what may be her last meal as her years pass. Still, there is no fear or worry, only contentment and a gentle resignation to life's realities.

And if that's the case, her prayer for the food on the table becomes a prayer for the providence of her entire life.

The never-ending prayer becomes more than a recitation, habit, or duty. It achieves communion with God as it becomes a face-to-face encounter.

Will you sit at this table with her?

Please take a moment to be silent and block out any minor distractions, such as the kitten she ignores. Consider the meal prepared for you, and remember the mercy and grace God has shown you.

Will you cherish the body and blood of Him who sustains you all your days here and in the hereafter as you enjoy a good meal that satisfies you for a moment?

Will you cling to the hope of true communion with God in the mystery of this sacred meal as you bow your head to pray?

Will you receive the One who is Alpha and Omega, the answer to all questions, the object of all longings, the creator and sustainer of life from everlasting to everlasting as you receive the elements?

Icebreakers

“What’s the most awkward or inappropriate place you could imagine someone trying to show off with a public prayer?” *(Bonus Points for any answers based on actual experience)*

or

“Imagine a famous person or celebrity trying to show off during prayer. Who would it be, and what would they pray for?”

or

Can you think of a time when you observed someone acting one way in a public or social setting but behaving differently in private? How did that affect your perception of them?

Discussion Questions

1. How do you personally define “prayer”? How has your understanding of prayer evolved over time?
2. Jesus warns against praying to be seen by others. How do you ensure that your spiritual practices remain authentic and not performative?
3. What do you think is the value of private prayer compared to communal prayer? How do you balance both in your life?
4. Jesus calls out hypocrites in their prayer practices. How would you define hypocrisy today, especially about faith and prayer?
5. Why do you think Jesus places such an emphasis on privacy in prayer? How does this perspective influence your own spiritual life?
6. According to this passage, what role does intention play in prayer? How do you ensure your intentions are aligned with the teachings of Jesus?
7. Have you ever felt self-conscious about praying in public or private? How does this passage encourage you to overcome that fear?
8. How does your personal prayer journey reflect the principles in Matthew 6:5-8? What changes have you made to adhere to these teachings in your prayer life?

Spiritual Activity: “Mirror, Mirror”

This activity gently and non-confrontationally encourages self-reflection and awareness of potential areas of hypocrisy. It fosters a deeper understanding of the importance of authenticity in one’s actions and provides a safe space for participants to share.

Materials Needed:

- Mirrors or handheld reflective surfaces (one for each participant).
- Index cards or small pieces of paper.
- Pens or pencils.

Hand out a mirror and an index card to each participant. Ask them to look into the mirror and reflect on the following questions, writing their thoughts on the index card:

1. What qualities do you see in yourself that you are proud of?
2. Is there an area in your life where your actions might not fully align with your beliefs?
3. How do you feel when you recognise the inconsistency in your behaviour?
4. What steps can you take to bridge the gap?

Invite participants to share their reflections in pairs or small groups, focusing on what they feel comfortable discussing. Emphasise a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere.

Facilitate a group discussion on the insights gained from the activity:

- What did you learn about yourself through this exercise?
- Why do you think striving for consistency between our beliefs and actions is important?
- How can we support each other in living more authentically?

Case Studies

Here are some case studies that can prompt thoughtful discussion within your group. Divide your group into smaller groups of 3-4 people and give them ONE of the following case studies to discuss.

Case Study #1: Sarah leads a weekly prayer meeting at her church, where she prays passionately and with eloquent words. However, she noticed some attendees seemed uncomfortable or disengaged during her prayers.

Discussion Points: Sarah's intentions are sincere, but does her public prayer align with Matthew 6:5-8? What might Jesus mean by praying in secret? How can Sarah adjust her approach to ensure her prayers are more about communing with God rather than impressing others?

Case Study #2: James feels inadequate when he hears others pray because they seem to articulate their thoughts more fluently and emotionally. He often finds himself overthinking his prayers to sound just right.

Discussion Points: How does Matthew 6:7 ("do not heap up empty phrases") apply to James' situation? How can James find authenticity and simplicity in his prayers without feeling pressured to perform?

Case Study #3: Melinda attends a monthly prayer gathering at her church, where people pray for the church's life and ministry. Recently, she's noticed a tendency for people to repeat the same requests and phrases each time.

Discussion Points: How does Matthew 6:8 ("Your Father knows what you need before you ask him") relate to Melinda's corporate prayer experience? How can the group maintain freshness and authenticity in their prayers? What role does listening play in corporate prayer?

Allow time for the groups to discuss their specific case study well. Then, bring the groups together. Ask each group to BRIEFLY present their case study and allow the other group members to input their thoughts on those scenarios.