Making Disciples

Notes for Group Session Twelve

Prayer and Fasting

Session Goals

1. The disciple will repeat the steps we are taught in the Lord's prayer.
2. The disciple will pray aloud in the session.
3. The disciple will identify a purpose of fasting.

Begin the session praying together and reviewing the Action Steps from the previous week. Pray with individuals who had difficulty applying the information from last week. Thank God where there were successes in the application.

Definition of prayer

Prayer is spiritual communication between us and God, a two-way relationship in which we not only talk to God but also listen to Him. Everyone's conversation with God is different. That is why prayer is the most intimate form of communication that directly connects us to God. Ephesians 2:18 "Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us."

How Jesus Taught Us to Pray-The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 "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.'"

Steps taught us in the Lord's Prayer.

1. ***Approach the Father*** *and give Him His rightful place.*

Psalm 145:18 "The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth."

2. ***Worship and praise God*** for who He is and what He has done.

Psalm 100:4 "Enter his gates with Thanksgiving and his courts with praise."

3. ***Ask for God's will*** and plans to be fulfilled.

Psalm 33:11 "The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations."

4. ***Ask God for the things we need***.

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

5. ***Confess our sins and repent.***

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

6. ***Request protection and help*** in overcoming sin and Satan's attacks on us.

Psalm 28:7 "The Lord is my strength and my shield..."

Things to pray for:

Our nations

2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Our financial needs

Philippians 4:19 "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

Our leaders

1 Timothy 2:1-7 "I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

Our families

Acts 16:31 "And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Healing

James 5:16 "Pray for one another that you may be healed."

Others

1 Timothy 2:11 "I urge you first of all to pray for all people…"

Our enemies

Matthew 5:44 "I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those that persecute you."

Wisdom

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously

without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

Israel

Psalm 122:6 "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

Ourselves

Genesis 24:12 "And he said, 'oh Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.'"

Laborers for the harvest

Matthew 9:38 "Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Ways to Pray

- Pray in a group.

Agreement is powerful.

Matthew 18:19 "Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything, they ask. It will be done for them by my father in heaven."

1 Timothy 2:8 "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands, without anger or quarreling."

Can be a small group.

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."

Be open with others in the group.

James 5:16 "Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."

As below, pray confidently, simply, and steadfastly.

- Pray on your own.

Pray confidently.

1 John 5:14-15 "And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him."

Pray in a quiet place.

Luke 6:12 "In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God."

Pray in private.

Matthew 6:6 "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who sees in secret, and the father who sees in secret will reward you."

Pray simply.

Matthew 6:7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their many words."

Pray early in the morning.

Mark 1:35 "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place. And there he prayed."

Pray steadfastly.

Luke 18:1 "And he told them a parable to the effect that they are always to pray and not lose heart."

Colossians 4:2 "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."

- Pray in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:13-19 "So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things?' The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.'"

Ephesians 6:18 "And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

Jude 1:20 "But you, beloved building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit."

- Pray Prophetically (Prophetic Intercession)

This is when the Holy Spirit gives you an urge to pray about something and you might not even have any knowledge about it. But you're praying a prayer request that's on the heart of God.

He might give you a thought, a vision, or a reminder of something you heard previously. God might speak to you through a Bible verse. Then you may be led to pray scripture. It can happen in a group or in your private prayer.

Ask God what is on His heart for prayer and wait. Let go of what you think about the situation and pray as He directs you. If you are in a group, pray about that subject until you feel that you and others feel that you have completed the prayers at that time. Thank God for His answers.

1 John 5:14 "Now this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything, according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

- Pray Constantly

Romans 12:12 "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."

James 4:3 “Rejoice, always pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17 “Pray without ceasing.”

- Pray scripture.

See next session.

Promises of answered prayer.

John 14:13-14 “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the father may be glorified in the son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”

1 John 3:22 “And whatever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases Him.”

Mark 11:24 “Therefore I tell you whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.”

Psalm 37:4 “Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:11 “Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”

Matthew 7:7 “Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:”

Types of Prayer

Ephesians 6:18 "And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." [This is a summary from an original group member.]

1. Thanksgiving *(Ps.100:4; Ps.95:2-3)*
2. Praise *(Ps.48:1)*
3. Worship *(Ps.95:6-7; Heb.13:15; Rev.4:1; Acts 13:2-3)*
4. Dedication or consecration *(Rom.12:1; Matt.16:26-27)*
5. Prayers of commitment *(Ps.31:5, Ps.37:5)*
6. Prayers of petition *(I John 5:14, Mark 11:24; Phil.4:6)*
7. Prayers of intercession *(Ezk.22:30, Isa.59:2-15; Daniel 9:1-27; I Tim.2:1)*
8. Prayers of supplication *(Heb.4:16, Zechariah 12:10)*
9. Prayers of command *(Joshua 10:12-15)*
10. Prayers that decree a blessing *(Numbers 6:22-27)*
11. Prayers that thwart the enemy *(Matt.21:18-22)*
12. Persistent prayers *(Lk.18:1-8, Luke 11:9-10)*
13. Praying in Holy Spirit *(Rom.8:26-27; I Cor.14:14-15)*

Fasting

To fast is to abstain from food or anything else that can hinder our communion with God. It could be all food or just rich foods or snack foods or things with sugar. It could even be television viewing or shopping. Primarily, though, it means not to eat. Whatever we fast it is taking our focus off other things to focus more on God. When you fast, spend the time that you are saving with God.

Types of Fast

Normal Fast - Involves abstaining from food but not water.

Luke 4:1-2 "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days and at the end of them he was hungry."

Absolute Fast - Involves abstaining from food and water, this is done for a maximum of three days.

Ezra 10:6 "Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God. He did eat no bread, nor drink water, for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away."

Esther 4:16 "Fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night, or day. I also, and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in unto the King, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

Acts 9:9 "And for three days he would know he was without sight and neither ate nor drank."

In the Bible we are told Moses fasted food and water for 40 days but that was clearly supernatural. Exodus 34:28-35

These were exceptional for exceptional circumstances.

Partial Fast - Involves abstaining from specific food, drinks, or activities.

Daniel 1:15 Daniel fasted rich foods and wine.

Daniel 10:2-3 In those days Daniel was mourning three full weeks. "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth. Neither did I anoint myself at all till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

Matthew 3:4 John the Baptist ate only locusts and wild honey.

Fast of marital relations by mutual consent

1 Corinthians 7:5 "Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, but then come together again."

How we should fast

Fast in secret

Matthew 6:16-18 "When you fast, do not look somber as they hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting. But only to your father, who is on scene. And your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Ask God for wisdom in regards to the type and length of the fast

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

Set a time limit for the fast

An example of this is *Esther 4:16 "Go gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan and fast for me neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day, in my maids, and I will fast likewise.*

Fast with a set purpose

Psalm 35:13 "For me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. I humbled myself with fasting."

Purposes of fasting

To humble ourselves before God

Joel 2:12 "Yet even now, declares the Lord. "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."

To ask for God's direction

Acts 13:2 "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart from me, Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

To appoint leaders

Acts 14:23 "And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

For healing of others

Psalm 35:13 "For me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. I humbled myself with fasting, and my prayer would return to my own heart."

2 Samuel 12:16 "David therefore sought God on behalf of the child and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground."

To ask God to fulfill a prophetic word given in the past.

Daniel 9:2-5 Daniel understood that Jeremiah had prophesied 70 years of desolation in Jerusalem. He repented for his people, fasted, and prayed as it was time to end.

For guidance

Ezra 8:21 "Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him the right way for us and our good ones and our possessions."

Ezra 8:23 "So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and he answered our prayer."

At times to cast out demons

Mark 9:29 "Why could we not cast it out? And he said to them, "this kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting."

To repent

Jonah 3:5 "The Ninevites believed in God a fast was proclaimed, and all of them from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth."

To subdue our flesh to strengthen our spirits

Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus' fast showed us that fasting can strengthen us against the devils' attacks.

To pray for your city or nation

Nehemiah 1:4 "So it was when I heard these words. Then I sat down and wept and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven."

How God tells us to fast

From The Passion Translation:

Isaiah 58:3-9 TPT "They say, 'Why is it when we fasted, you did not see it? We starved ourselves and you didn't seem to notice. Because on the day you fasted, you were seeking only your own desires, and you continue to exploit your workers.' During your fast, you quarrel and fight with others and strike them with an angry fist. When you fast like that, your voice will not be heard high. Do you think I'm impressed with that kind of fast? Is it just a day to starve your bodies and make others think you're humble, and lie down in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call that a fast? Do you think I Yahweh will be pleased with that? This is the kind of fast that I desire: ***Remove the heavy chains of oppression. Stop exploiting your workers. Set free the crush and the mistreated! Break off every yoke of bondage. Share your food with the hungry, provide for the homeless and bring them into your home. Clothe the naked! Don't turn your back on your own flesh and blood.*** *Then my favor will bathe you in sunlight until you are like the dawn bursting through a dark night. And then suddenly your healing will manifest. You will see your righteousness march out before you, and the glory of Yahweh will protect you from all harm!* ***Then Yahweh will answer when you pray. When you cry out for help, He will say, 'I am here.'"***

Practical advice for fasting

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. If you have any medical conditions that require you to take medicine with food, it might be a good idea to ask your doctor if you should fast. If you're diabetic or have another condition that affects your blood sugar, be mindful of that and keep monitoring it.

Action Steps

- Write down what you pray during the week and write down Gods response. Share it with the group next week.

- Ask God if He wants you to fast, choose a simple fast, for instance skipping breakfast, dessert, or missing a favorite TV show. Share your experience next week.