



## Prayer



There are many elements in a meeting – of course praise, Bible reading, teaching etc are important but what about prayer – could we give it a higher priority and encourage everyone to participate? If we can encourage people with learning disabilities (and others) to pray by speaking to Jesus **for themselves** this will be life changing for them. It is the one thing they can do anytime, anywhere and not just at Church or a Prospects meeting and is not dependent on being able to read, write or communicate verbally.

### Who are we praying to – what does the Bible tell us?

*And not only will we be saved, but we also rejoice right now in what God has done for us through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of Jesus that we are now **God's friends**. (Romans 5:11)*

*You are my friends if you do what I tell you to do. I no longer call you servants, because servants don't know what their master is doing. But now I call you friends, because I have told you everything that my Father told me. (John 15:14-15)*

### And so prayer is talking with a friend – can we really grasp that and share it in our groups?

*In prayer 3 things don't matter*

1. *Quality*
2. *Quantity*
3. *Knowledge*

*Two things do matter*


1. *Being natural*
2. *Being honest*


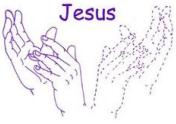
(Taken from How to Pray by John Pritchard)


### How do you pray in your group?

- led from front
- everybody joining in
- in small groups

Below are some ideas you could try in your group – every group is different and you will know what will work best.

Have a **symbol or object** – (praying hands)  to bring out at the start of the prayer time – you might also use a piece of music to start and end the prayer time – try to use the same music each time so that people know what is happening.

To encourage people to pray use short **thank you prayers** Sign thank you Jesus. – individually or as echo prayer.  


**Sorry prayers** – people need to know that we all make mistakes but when we come and say sorry to God he will forgive us and he forgets all about it – so it is a good thing to say sorry. 


**Idea** – use something black to represent the bad thing we have done – encourage people to say sorry (silently) and tell them that when they say sorry God does forgive them.


*But if we confess our sins, God will forgive us. We can trust God to do this. He always does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrong things we have done. (1 John 1: 9)*

*I, I am the one who wipes away all your sins. I do this to please myself. I will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)*

**Idea** – Take black material to the foot of the cross, lay it down and pick up something shiny and clean - the way God sees us - or use hand washing to represent cleanliness.

**Help prayers** – what is worrying people – give them a stone – ask them to pray and then bring the stone – make into the shape of a cross. (Remember to explain that the cross represents Jesus – we can bring the things that we are worried about to him – we don't need to carry them around). 

**Blanket** – creating a private space, wrapped in Jesus' love where people can talk to Him privately about anything on their heart and share their love for Him as well as receive. 

**Prayer circle** – People stand in a circle and the person who wants to say a prayer or have prayers said for them walks into the middle of the circle, they say what they would like prayed for and people remaining in the circle say prayers for them. 

**Parachute** - Everyone gathers around the parachute and holds on. Together raise/lower the parachute as we thank God for things, raise lower it more vigorously for things the Group is particularly thankful for. Sorry, we normally leave it lowered and still as we think about the things we are sorry for. Then again raise and lower as we ask God for things. We have found that people who aren't verbal react well to this – somehow the feeling of the breeze on their cheek seems to be meaningful to them.



**Echo prayer** – leader says a line and then group repeat it. Keep it simple. Gives people, who have never prayed before an opportunity to hear their own voice in prayer – helps to break that barrier.

**Lollipop** – lots of ideas (contact Ivy for more details of this) using the children's crossing (lollipop) which has **STOP** on it –

- S** Sorry
- T** Thanks
- O** Others
- P** Please

**The Lord's Prayer** with signing or with actions – see appendix 1 for action version.

**Stones** - to represent things that are worrying people and are heavy - pray and then bring them to Jesus – either to the foot of the cross (need to explain) or into a picture of open hands (Giving them into Jesus hands)



**Bubbles** – pray quietly about our mistakes and sins. Blow bubbles up into the air – shows us letting go of our sin. As they pop and disappear this symbolises God forgiving our sins, which disappear without trace.



*I, I am the one who wipes away all your sins. I do this to please myself.  
I will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)*

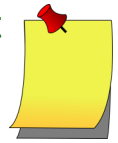
**Candles** – be careful if using real ones – remember the implication of this if people try it at home. Small battery operated ones can be bought cheaply and much safer. (need to explain why we are using a candle – its about bring light into dark situations – be clear that Jesus brings light but Jesus is not a candle)



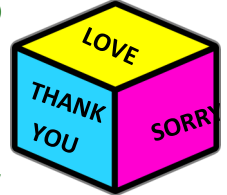
**Magazines/Newspapers** – cut out pictures and headlines of things to pray about. Talk about them and encourage someone to pray for each one.



**Post it notes** – write or draw a prayer request on post-it and stick it on cross, a prayer wall or a prayer tree.



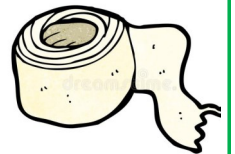
**Prayer cube** – cube can be made out of cardboard as craft activity. Helps to give people ideas of what to pray for. Suggestions for each side: Thank God for something that happened today. Pray for a friend who doesn't know Jesus. Tell God one thing you love about him. Say sorry for something you have done wrong today. Praise God for something He has made. Pray for someone who is having a hard time. (it may be possible to use symbols or pictures in place of words.)



**Sharp stone > Smooth stone** - Good for a small group. People think about something bad that is happening in their life or in the life of someone they know. While they're praying about it they pick up the sharp stone and maybe rub their fingers along the edges. When they're ready they drop the stone (gently) into some water and pick up and take away a smooth stone, which again they can rub with their fingers. Sharp stone > smooth stone is a symbol of God answering prayer – even though he doesn't always answer it quite as we expect.



**Bandage** - cut everyone in the group a small piece of bandage, encourage them to think of someone who is in poor health, sad, lonely etc and pray for them. When prayers are over lay all the pieces of bandage at the foot of a cross, symbolising giving them into Jesus' care.



**Music** – something quiet for people to listen to during a time of reflection – or at beginning/end of prayer time.



**Silence** – a time of quiet to let God speak to us – start very short and then extend it – you may be surprised at how even the noisiest people respond to this.



**Prayer stations** – for a special prayer event you might want to set up room with various prayer stations with some of the above ideas.

## Appendix 1

**Our Father** *hands joined*

**In heaven** *hands joined and raised high*

**Hallowed be your name** *heads bowed*

**Your kingdom come** *release hands and make a gesture of invitation*

**Your will be done** *a salute*

**On earth as it is in heaven** *all stamp feet for 'earth' and then clap high above heads for 'heaven'*

**Give us this day our daily bread** *hands out ready to receive*

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us** *hands clasped together in front of the body and then released; turn and shake hands with the people either side*

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil** *hands together in front of the face, shielding away temptation and then one hand up as a stop sign*

**For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory** *one hand pointing up high; the other hand raised in a clenched fist; finally both hands raised above the head high, with fingers spread*

**Forever and ever** *draw a large circle in front of yourself with one hand several times*

**Amen**





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