

## LET'S PRAY FIRST

I am not God.

But I am a friend of God.

## LET'S PRAY HARD

I am totally unlike the poor,  
powerless, connectionless widow.

I am a child of God.

## LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

I need you to help me keep praying.

# LET'S PRAY A LOT

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

## WHY?

MATTHEW 22:37

The King of Heaven wants my love.

I need the love of the King of Heaven.

## HOW?

JUDE 20-21

Develop a Breath Prayer.

Memorize a Word Prayer.

Choose moments to pray in your daily routine.

### Getting Started:

Who do you know that prays a lot? How do you think they got to this point? What kinds of things do they pray for? In what ways do they pray?

### Digging In:

Read these Scriptures aloud in your group (Dt 6:5; 10:12; 11:22; Josh 22:5; 1Kgs 10:9; Jer 31:3; Hosea 3:1; Zeph 3:17; Mt 22:37; Jn 15:9; 21:5; 1Cor 16:22; 2Thes 3:5; 2Tim 2:22; Philemon 4-5; Rev 2:4). How does it impact you to hear God over and over again ask for your love? Are you surprised? Are you unmoved? Read these verses (Dt 7:8; 30:6, 20; Jdgs 5:31; 2Chr 9:8; Ps 18:1; 37:28; 116:1; Pr 3:12; Jn 3:16; Eph 1:3-6; 2:7-8; 6:23; Rom 8:28, 37, 39; 2Thes 2:16; 2Tim 4:8; James 1:12; Jude 20-21). How do they speak to our need for the love of the King of Heaven? Why do you think Augustine said, "True whole prayer is nothing but

love"? Observe the relationship between prayer and God's love in Jude 20-21. What are the three commands in 1Thes. 5:16-18? How do they relate to one another? What does it mean to pray without ceasing?

### Living It Out:

Read Richard Foster's thoughts on developing a "breath prayer" on the back of the notes. Develop and write out your own breath prayer. Select and memorize a short verse of Scripture to use in regular, daily prayer. As a first step, choose 3 moments in your daily routine as reminders to pray your breath prayer and/or your word prayer. Will you let a friend in your group encourage you in developing your new habit of praying a lot?

## BREATH PRAYER

As Christians over the centuries have sought to “pray without ceasing,” they have developed an expression called Breath Prayers. The idea has its roots in the Psalms, for example, “O Lord, you have searched me and known me” (Ps. 139:1). The concept is of a short, simple prayer of petition that can be spoken in one breath, hence the name “breath prayer.”

The most famous of the breath prayers is the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” This prayer is derived from Jesus’ parable on self-righteousness, in which the tax collector prayed, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” (Luke 18:13).

But the Jesus Prayer is only one example. It is also possible to discover your own individual breath prayer. Here are a few prayers of my own: “O Lord, baptize me with love”; “Jesus, let me receive your grace”; “Reveal my sin, O Holy Spirit”; “Lord Jesus, help me feel loved.”

These prayers are brief—seldom more than seven or eight syllables; intimate—God is addressed in a close, personal way; dependent—the opposite of self-reliant. Notice that the prayers are all requests. This is self-focused prayer, but it is not self-centered prayer, for the requests of breath prayer are seasoned reflections on the will and ways of God.

Breath prayer is discovered more than created. We are asking God to show us his will, his way, his truth for our present need.

*Adapted from Prayer Richard Foster.*

## WORD PRAYER

“The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. <sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup>he restores my soul.”

*Psalm 23:1-3a*

“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

*Psalm 63:1*

“Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; <sup>5</sup>guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.”

*Psalm 25:4-5*

“Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.”

*Psalm 90:14*

“Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”

*Psalm 115:1*

“Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

*Psalm 73:25-26*

“Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.”

*Psalm 141:3*

“Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. <sup>7</sup>You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.”

*Psalm 32:6-7*

## CHOOSE MOMENTS TO PRAY IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE:

When you see your favorite color, let it remind you of something about the character of God.

A surgeon can be prompted to pray by each scrubdown before an operation.

A bank teller can pray whenever someone comes to the window.

Washing dishes, making beds, waiting in supermarket lines, and waiting for appointments all can call us into prayer.

Jogging, swimming, and walking can remind us as well.

We can put sticky notes on the refrigerator, bathroom mirror, or television set.

Daily tasks such as picking up the newspaper, turning on the cell phone, and taking a shower can prompt us into prayer.