

INSTANT MESSAGING/PRAYER

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OUTLINE

- I. QUESTIONS
- II. DEFINITION
- III. BIBLE VERSES-LUKE 11:1, MATTHEW 7:7a, JAMES 4:2b
- IV. STORY-GOD'S FILING CABINET
- V. BIBLE VERSE-1 THESSALONIANS 5:17
- VI. STORY-CONTINUAL PRAYER FROM CONTINUAL HURT
- VII. A.C.T.S. AND ACTIVITIES
- VIII. BIBLE VERSE-ROMANS 8:26
- IX. PRAYER

ACTIVITY: Cell phones-if possible have each student bring their cell phones to the meeting. If you have individuals who do not have cell phones have index cards and pens available.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever been asked to pray in front of a bunch of people? Was it your family, friends, peers, classmates, or worse- a bunch of adults? Did your prayer start off ok, but in the middle of it your mind just went blank and you quickly ended it with "Amen"? Or have you ever written out your entire prayer only to start reading it and suddenly you come to a simple word that you just wrote and for the life of you, you have no idea how to read the word? Have you even just prayed the good old faith..."The Lord's Prayer" and you still ended up missing a line? I think we have all had one or more of these scenarios happen at one time in our life. Right? Or is it just me?

DEFINITION OF PRAYER:

Prayer is an ongoing connection with the Heavenly Father. It was not intended to be a memorized or repeated day in and day out. The Bible says our prayers are not to be vain repetition (**Matthew 6:7**) Instead; prayer is a way for each of us to reverently enter the presence of our Heavenly Father and daily build a relationship with Him.

HELP ME TO PRAY:

In **Luke 11:1** Jesus has gone off to pray and his side kicks, the disciples, are just hanging out waiting for Jesus to finish. When Jesus is done "...one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord teach us to pray.'" Even Jesus chosen friends, His followers, asked for help in praying. We may question why the disciples were not well-polished prayers since they were hanging with Jesus? They say we act like our friends and talk like our friends. The answer is...Jesus, their friend, their Lord, and their example often prayed early in the morning in a very private place. Jesus' prayer life was practiced alone. The Disciples revealed a child like quality in which the Lord delighted in when they said they needed help and they expressed their desire to learn.

BIBLE VERSES:

MATTHEW 7:7a

"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for..."

JAMES 4:2b

"You do not have, because you do not ask."

STORY-GOD'S FILING CABINET:

An elderly man died and went to heaven. As he approached the throne of God he noticed a large filing cabinet beside the throne. The elderly man began to panic thinking God had kept files of all the sins he had committed over the years. Without asking any questions the man began to explain how he had tried all his life to be a good Christian. He went on to say he was content with his life and seldom asked for anything. There was a moment of silence and then God said..."Son, this is not a file cabinet of sins, instead it is a file of all the things I wanted to give you, but you never asked for.

BIBLE VERSES:

1 Thessalonians 5:17

"Pray continually."

STORY: CONTINUAL PRAYER COMES FROM CONTINUAL HURT.

Every night before bed a young alcoholic man prayed for strength to fight his addiction. But every day he falls to the temptation of drinking. This went on for years. He was discouraged but continued to pray. This prayer life became a strength in his life even though it seemed God was not answering his prayer. Wisdom came with age and this man began to realize that just maybe God did not cure him because then he would not continue to come to the Lord in prayer every night.

DO NOT:

- bargain with God..."If you do this I will do this." "If you get me out of this situation I will never do this again."
- threaten..."If this prayer is not answered this time I am not going to believe in the power of prayer ever again."
- have the prayer all about you. I need...I want...Give me...

HOW TO PRAY THE A.C.T.S. PRAYER:

(If a student does not have a cell phone give him/her 4 index cards and a pen for the activities)

A.C.T.S. is an acronym for a powerful model prayer:

Adoration

Confessions

Thanksgiving

Supplication (intercession)

ADORATION: Begin the prayer by adoring God. Praise and worship HIM. This is a time for telling God what He means to you and how much you love Him. This is **not** the same as Thanksgiving where you thank God for all He has done, but a time to tell God how magnificent/holy/glorious He is, to focus solely on Him, to tell Him all the wondrous beautiful things about Him you love.

****ACTIVITY:** Have each student use their phones to text a prayer of **Adoration** to God and then send it to themselves as a reminder. **EX.** God You are awesome and I absolutely adore You. Your power amazes me daily. Your timing is unbelievable. Excellent is Your Name in all the earth.

CONFESSION: This is when we confess all our sins to God. Unconfessed sin creates a barrier between you and God and can hinder your prayers. Begin by confessing your sin to Him with a repentant heart (stop and turn your life around.) Ask God to bring to mind any sins you may not be aware of so that you may repent and confess. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness I John 1:8-9. Often times the feeling of a weight lifting will follow this step. Important: Nothing can separate you from the love of God. But we can separate ourselves from the love of God just as Adam and Eve ran and hid from the Presence of God after their sin in the Garden-Notice God called after them, He did not wait for them to come to Him.

****ACTIVITY:** Have each student use their phones to text a prayer of **Confession** to God and then send it to themselves as a reminder. **EX.** Merciful Father, I am so sorry that I yelled at my parents today. Please, forgive me for talking behind "Amy's" back in the locker room. I am so sorry for the bad language I used again today.

THANKSGIVING: This is where we count our blessings, thanking and praising God for all He has given us and done for us in life. You may begin with the basics such as [family](#), friends, [food](#), shelter, safety, [jobs](#), [health](#), healing. Thank Him for hearing your prayers and for forgiving your sins, for His all-consuming love for you. Thank Him for His promises and for His promises to you

****ACTIVITY:** Have each student use their phones to text a prayer of **Thanksgiving** to God and then send it to themselves as a reminder. **EX.** Thank You for walking me through that final exam. Thank You for helping me say "No" one more time. Thank You Lord for the friends that hold me accountable every weekend. Thank You that my parents are not fighting today.

SUPPLICATION: This is also known as Intercession. This is the phase of prayer where we come to the Father asking God to supply needs for ourselves and others. Be specific in your prayers. For example, instead of asking for God to bless you and your family, ask Him to help you focus in math class and to help the teacher teach math in a way that you can understand it. Ask God to give your mom and dad time to really talk so they can grow close again. If you feel led to pray for a certain person but don't know exactly what that person needs, ask God to lead you in prayer. He will.

****ACTIVITY:** Have each student use their phone to text a prayer of **Supplication** to God and then send it to themselves as a reminder. **EX.** Lord, I am lonely please, help me fill this hole in my heart. Jesus, I am trying to decide which college to attend next year. Guide me. Please, Lord help me to stay pure...it is getting harder and harder to say 'No'. Help me, Lord.

Good News About Prayer: With prayer . . .

1. You never get a busy signal
2. Lines are never tied up
3. Circuits are never down or out of commission
4. You get through on the very first try every time
5. You are not "roaming"
6. You do not waste minutes

REMEMBER... prayer is an **act** of talking with God. It is about communication. It is about relationship with the Father. Use these steps to help you obtain that but don't feel you must adhere to any rigid rules. Also don't forget that communication is a two way street, that means you have to listen as well. You may not hear at first but with practice you begin to feel God speaking to your heart. Thank God in advance for the answers to your prayers and remember when you are tired and weary and you no longer know what to pray...the Holy Spirit intercedes for you making beautiful prayers out of wordless sighs and aching groans. So the next time you sigh or groan remember there is a beautiful prayer, just for you, being sent to the throne of the Most High.

ROMANS 8:26

"Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:PRAY TOGETHER:

Father, I daily stand in awe of You and Your power. I come to you and confess that I am just a sinner. Forgive me for thinking bad thoughts and doing bad things again today. Help me to do better tomorrow. Thank You for good friends who will tell me when I am falling to the ways of the world. Lord, I come to You again today and ask that You guide my thoughts and actions. Help me to be more like You. Lord, I thank You in advance for answered prayers. In Jesus' name. AMEN!