



Prayer Training

In Community Bible Study everything is based on prayer. Every decision made at all levels of the ministry is enveloped in prayer. We have the privilege of spending time in prayer corporately as a Leaders Council every week using the ACTS format - Adoration or Praise, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication or Intercession. The responsibilities of the Prayer Chairman are to point us to God, to pray for each of you, and to train and encourage you in your personal prayer life.

Let's take a walk through the ACTS method of praying – beginning with Adoration or Praise.

Adoration and Praise Training

“Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 139. We often turn to this chapter when we need to be reminded that we are God's creation. But this chapter actually tells us a lot about God.”

- Go around the room and read one verse at a time.
- On a white board, record what each verse tells us about God.
- Tell your leaders to think beyond the intellectual answers that have been written on the white board and make it personal. How do these characteristics affect your personality?

For example, from verse 13 we learn that God uniquely creates each of us. It goes well beyond what we read in Genesis 1:28-28. *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. . .’”*

Psalm 139:13-16 elaborates on how God created us in our mother's womb.

- Me, my hair and eye color, my nature, my abilities, my passions. (The Prayer Chairman should feel free to talk about the unique way in which God has designed you.)
- Knowing the detail with which God created me makes me appreciate the detail in which He loves me. (Provide time to discuss, either at tables or as a large group.)

“As we read through Psalm 139 and talked about what we learned about God, we were praising and worshiping Him. Likewise, when we begin prayer with Praise, we state **what is true about God, honoring Him for Who He is**. During this time, we are focusing on **Who God is**, rather than **What He has done**. If we only praise God when we like what He does, we will have a crisis of faith every time we are faced with a trial in our lives.

When we praise God, it gives **Him the glory that He rightly deserves**. It lifts our eyes off our problems and onto our **Mighty God** and teaches us more about **His character**. The more you worship God in your prayers, the more you focus on God in other areas of your life and want to know Him better. You begin to pay more attention to His attributes while you are reading His Word, and you will often be led to worship as you study, just as we did while discussing Psalm 139. Praising God defeats Satan's plan to distract and discourage us and sends him running. If you ever feel spiritually attacked, start praising God out loud, either with words or song, because Satan will not stick around to hear it.”

Lead your Leaders Council in prayer – focusing on praise. If you find it helpful, use ABC's of Praise found in the Resources & Courses section of FISHER.

- Have each leader offer up at least one praise to God. Tell God something that you know and love about Him. You can expound on one of His characteristics on His Names, or simply state an attribute is true.
- Remind the leaders that they don't have to be overly "spiritual" or eloquent in their phrases.
- CBS prayer time is informal and comfortable, and it is meant to be a conversation with God and with each other.
- Take 3 – 5 minutes to praise the Lord.
- Prayer Chairman begins and closes the prayer time.

Confession Training

Use the following video to introduce this next section: <https://www.ignitermedia.com/products/7006-psalm-139-2:00>

"As we saw in the video, praising God for Who He is naturally leads to conviction over who we are and what we have done, so the second step in our prayer time will be Silent Confession. We do this in order to have a clear heart before God.

Isaiah 59:1-2 says *"Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear, but your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."*

As a prayer warrior, this is a pretty sobering verse. But please, as we talk about confession, remember your position in Christ. Romans 8:1 tells us *"there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

Just as the verse in Isaiah says, it is not that God's ear is too dull to hear, or that He absolutely will not answer your prayers if you have unconfessed sin in your life. He is God, and He will do what He wants, and He has answered my prayers many times when I did not deserve it. But He wants us to be free of the entanglements that sin creates in our lives. In the book of Nehemiah, the Jews were trying to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem that had been destroyed by their enemies. They had many struggles along the way, but at one point Nehemiah says, *"the strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall."* Having sin in our lives is like having rubble lying around that we can't help but trip and stumble over.

Unfortunately, confession is continuous, because we are continually sinful. But thankfully, 1 John 1:9 promises *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* Listen to what that verse says. God is faithful to forgive. Do not ever make the mistake of thinking that your sins are greater than Jesus' power to forgive."

- Allow an opportunity for the leaders to spread out and have some time for silent confession.
- Give the following list of "Confession Verses" for them to look up.
- Allow 10 – 15 minutes
- Sing "Lord, I Need You." Lyrics:
<https://www.bing.com/search?q=lord+i+nee+you+lyrics&form=EDGEAR&q=AS&cvid=fffb0cc2e3a34492aaa53a340ccc06ea&cc=US&setlang=en-US>

Confession Verses:

Proverbs 16:18	Psalm 78	Deuteronomy 2:30	Philippians 2:21
I Samuel 30:6	Hebrews 30:6	Galatians 5:20	Ephesians 5:8-12
Luke 22:24	James 3:16	Hebrews 3:15	Revelation 2:4
Revelation 3:15-17	James 1:19-20	Isaiah 53:6	Psalms 37:7
Hebrews 3:7-8	2 Kings 17:33	Matthew 6:25-34	

Thanksgiving Training

“The third step in our prayer time together is Thanksgiving. Praise and thanksgiving are different: Praise is worshiping God for **Who He is**, Thanksgiving is thanking Him **for the things He has done**.

During this step in our prayer time, we want to think back on what we have prayed in the weeks prior and thank Him for how He has answered. Just like the nine lepers who ran to celebrate their healing without thanking Jesus, we tend to forget as soon as we receive what we ask. We tend to take His answers in stride or think that “things just worked out.” We don’t give God the credit for His continual, personal involvement in our lives and in CBS. May we always be like the one leper, who turned back and expressed his gratitude for Jesus for healing.

It is also appropriate to thank God for what He is going to do, and for what He is doing that we do not see. Just before Jesus fed 5,000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread, He gave thanks in preparation of the miracle (John 6:11). He also gave thanks before He broke the bread and passed the cup at the Last Supper, in advance of the coming communion, suffering and salvation.

Philippians 4:6-7 says “*Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition **with thanksgiving**, let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ. Jesus.*” Thanksgiving is one of the keys to the peace that God promises in this verse. Because I know that He is for me and not against me, as I pray, I can thank Him for the wonderful ways He will work His will out for my good and His glory.

I Thessalonians 5:16-18 says to “*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*”

- Do we thank God even when things are hard?
- Lack of gratitude equals lack of trust.
- Complaining illuminates and spreads our unbelief.
- Thanksgiving can be just as contagious as complaining. When you respond to any situation with thanksgiving, others tend to follow.

Remind the leaders that each of them is an answer to prayer – whether they are a new leader or a continuing one.

Spend 3 – 5 minutes offering the Lord thanks for what He is doing, has done, or is going to do in CBS this year.

Supplication/Intercession Training

“We have talked about focusing our eyes upon God in Praise, Silently Confessing our sins and Thanking Him for all the marvelous things that He has done. Now it is time for Supplication or Intercession, which is to ask Him for what we desire for ourselves and for others.

In John 5:14-15 there is an amazing promise concerning prayer. *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: 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 what we asked of Him.”* At first glance, that sounds like a blank check to receive whatever we want. But the key to interpreting that verse and benefiting from the remarkable promise is those four important words – according to His will.

In Psalm 37:4, we are told that *“God wants to give us the desires of our hearts.”* But we forget there are some conditions to that promise. Verse 3 – 6 tells us to *“Trust in the Lord; to do what is good; to take delight in the Lord, to commit your way to the Lord, and then He will act.”* God’s commands should be our desire, not the other way around.

God’s promises that are recorded in His Word and revealed to us by His Spirit are true for us today and “Yes” in Jesus Christ.

Pray specifically for your CBS class needs (CL’s, CT’s, admin, growing the class, etc.) When we have a need, we normally have an idea of how we would fix it. We have prayed before for a certain number of teachers, or that our babysitters would show up. God chose to show us He could accomplish more with less. We have felt like Gideon at times, having the absolute minimum of adults in the Children and Youth Department. We have all sorts of desired outcomes, and we come to God with our list. But we need to remember that God’s ways and His thoughts are higher than ours, and He is able to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine. When we tell Him our problem and then tell Him how to solve it, we set ourselves up to be disappointed with His sovereignly chosen path for us. Or worse, He gives us what we ask for, which is less than what He wanted to give. Now, this doesn’t mean that we can’t tell God what our desires are or ask for something specific. But we need to be open to what He wants to give us, and ultimately be ready to pray the prayer from Luke 22:42 that never fails: *“Not my will, but Yours be done.”*

So how do we make sure we are praying according to His will? One of the best ways is by praying God’s words back to Him by using Scripture in your prayers. Ask God to fill your mind with whatever is true, noble, right and pure. When you do this, you are asking for what He wants for you, because those are His words in Philippians 4:8. When you ask that He manifest the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5 in you, you know He wants the same thing because those are His characteristics.

God’s Word is powerful, living and active, and useful for teaching, rebuking and training. Isaiah 55:10-11 says, *“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and break for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”* When we pray using God’s Word, it reminds us Who He is and increases our faith and aligns our will and desires with His.

Prayer precedes every revival, successful ministry and a significant number of God’s miracles. Oswald Chambers says, “Prayer is the greater work.” There are simply some things that God will not do unless we ask Him. So if you want to see God move in CBS and in your life, the change will begin when you pray. God said in Ezekiel 22:30: *“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.”* How tragic if God is delaying a revival in our community or family because He is waiting for us to stand and pray. Don’t you want Him to look down and say, “Ah, there are those (fill in your CBS class name) CBS leaders praying again. That is where I’m going to move?”

Ephesians 3:14-21- “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power

through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may swell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generation, forever and ever. Amen.”

- Break into groups of three and pray for one another, using Paul’s prayer for the saints in Ephesians 3:14-21. One member of the group can pray the verse, inserting the name of one of the leaders in the prayer. The one you are praying for can lift up come specific requests concerning her/his ministry or family and the group will take some time to pray as the Spirit leads.
- Keep the Ephesians verses in mind as you pray, sifting the leader’s requests through that Scripture. Then do the same for each member of your group.
- Place a seasoned leader in each group so he/she can keep the group focused and moving.
- Spend 15 minutes in this activity.

When distributing core group lists to the core leaders, a good resource to include in their packet is “30 Prayers for Core Members” which can be found in the Resources & Courses section of FISHER.