

## *Essentials of Discipleship 7: Praying the Kingdom*

### *Part 1: Sharing about your own prayers and praying*

Ask the group:

- What makes a time of personal prayer good or not-so-good?
- When has your prayer seemed most fulfilling? When has it been toughest to pray?

### *Part 2: Studying Jesus' Teaching about Prayer*

Read Matthew 6.5-15.

- What does Jesus teach his disciples that their prayers should be like (and not be like)?

Many Christians see in the Lord's Prayer (or Disciples' Prayer) an ideal pattern for our prayers.

- What does that pattern consist of? Or: What are the main themes of the Lord's Prayer?
- How helpful do you find it to pray the Lord's prayer verbatim? Is it better to see the Lord's prayer just as a pattern of prayer? How should we heed Jesus instruction to 'pray like this'?

Read Luke 1.5-13 (this follows Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer)

- What does the parable of the persistent friend tell us about prayer?
- What picture of God does the parable suggest? Or: How good a description of God is the man in the parable?
- How does the second parable (v 11-12) balance the first?
- What does 'ask, seek, knock' mean in the light of the parable? Or: Does God guarantee to answer all our prayers?

Here are a number of different forms of prayer:

- Personal prayer
- Small group prayer
- Prayer ministry
- Intercessory prayer
- Which of these do we find easy or difficult to participate in?
- How might Jesus's teaching challenge or help the way we go about these different forms of prayer?

### *Part 3: Praying with Scripture*

(You may need to provide some people with pen and paper)

Divide the Group in pairs or groups of three and give them each one of the following Psalms to read. Psalm 6 ; Psalm 15 (cf Ps 1); Psalm 51 (cf Ps 32); Psalm 58; Psalm 111.

Ask them in each case to write down and summarise for the group:

- What kind of prayer is it? Or: What is the theme of the prayer?
- What (roughly) is the pattern of the psalm in each case?
- Which of these Psalms or themes are we used to praying with?
- Which are harder to use? Why?
- How might these Scripture prayers help us to extend the range of our own praying?

### *Part 4: For Further Study: The Lord's Prayer in More Detail*

Read Matthew 6.9-13 and compare it with Luke 11.2-4

- Consider carefully the differences between the two versions of the prayer. If it helps make a list. Which differences are significant?
- What implications does the existence of two versions of the prayer have for the idea of using the prayer as a pattern of prayer or as a set prayer?