

# Exploring prayer II



Way In

We saw in the previous session how ‘meeting God’ is both the starting point for true prayer, and also its ultimate goal. However, prayer is also about asking the God who we meet to make a difference in our lives and in our world. This is what it means to pray ‘may your will be done on earth as in heaven’. This session will consider this ‘asking’ aspect of prayer.



## Connect: Share with the group

1. Which do you think is the best city that you have visited? What made it special?
2. What have you done in terms of your ‘action point’ from the last meeting?
3. How would you finish this sentence: ‘I know God answers prayer because...’?



## Contemplate

1. Pass a ball of string (or wool) around the group. Each person holds onto the string and passes the ball on, so that the whole group is eventually holding a circle of string.
2. Read Ephesians 2:21-22.
3. Go round the circle, and invite as many as feel able to pray this aloud:  
*God who joins our lives, fill us with your Spirit. Amen.*



## Consider 1: Read Scripture

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say:

‘Father, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.  
Give us each day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive  
everyone who sins against us.  
And lead us not into temptation.’”

Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and

give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

(Luke 11:1-13) TNIV

## Wesley’s wisdom

Whatever other ends are answered by prayer, this is one, and it seems a primary one, *that we may have the petitions which we ask of him*. Asking is the appointed means of receiving; and that for others, as well as for ourselves...

In proof of the general truth, that *God gives us both temporal and spiritual blessings, in answer to each other’s prayers*, I need only remind you of one more Scripture: “Let them pray over him; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him”.

(John Wesley: Letter to Miss Bishop  
26 December, 1776)



## Consider 2: More about

- Jesus’ disciples knew how to pray, yet there was something different about Jesus’ prayer-life that made them want to learn more.
- Jesus taught them to ask God for both their material needs and their spiritual

needs – even for the gift of the Holy Spirit.


- Jesus encourages us to be persistent in our asking, and not to give up too easily.
- The emphasis of the words ‘ask’, ‘seek’ and ‘knock’ is *keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking*.
- Our confidence in asking is not in the quality of our prayers, but in the kindness of our Father, to whom we pray.
- Believing that we are praying to a good, kind and generous Father, perhaps helps us deal with prayers that don’t appear to be answered how and when we might like. Can we trust such a God with the answer, whatever it is?


(for more on Prayer, see the articles on the Methodist Church website [www.methodist.org.uk/deepeningdiscipleship](http://www.methodist.org.uk/deepeningdiscipleship))





### Consider 3: Your response

Spend a moment in quiet, considering your own response to the readings. You might like to jot down your thoughts in the following boxes.

 What new thing have I seen about ‘asking prayer’?

 What puzzles me about ‘asking prayer’?

 What encourages me to ask God for things in prayer?

 What could I pray for that would help my walk with Jesus?



### Consider 4: Sharing wisdom

Now share your thoughts, questions and insights together in the group.

- Take it in turns to share something from your personal reflection.
- Listen to one another carefully.
- Discuss the issues raised, sharing your knowledge, experience and wisdom together.
- Aim to help one another find out what you are each learning about the importance of the spiritual practices in following Jesus.



### Commit 1: Reflect


Take a few moments to sit in silence together, reflecting on this session. How is God asking you to respond as an individual? These questions might help you think through your response:

- How persistent am I in my praying?
- How much do I pray for my own spiritual needs – or for the the spiritual needs of others?
- What could help me be more persistent in my prayers for myself and others?
- Would it help to pray regularly with others in a small group?



### Commit 2: Focus

Write one thing in the box below that you would like to take away from this session, either to do, or to think and pray about further.

 **MY ACTION POINT:** In response to this session on prayer, before the next meeting I would like to...



### Commit 3: Pray

Lord Jesus, our desire is to know you, to serve you, and to love you more deeply. Help us as we seek to deepen our discipleship this week. Amen.