



How to Pray with Your Connect Group

You've reached the end of your Connect Group's meeting and it's time to pray. This is an anxiety-infused moment for many. Some members are nervous to speak in front of everyone else, (especially with sensitive prayers), while leaders may fear that no one will say anything and the prayer will become a circle of silence.

Prayer is one of most important aspects of Connect Groups and should occur at each gathering. Use these tips to encourage your group members to share and experience the healing, uplifting power of prayer:

1. **Remind your small group about the importance of prayer.** Make it clear how critical it is to pray as a group. Not only is this a chance to commune with God, but also to create deeper, stronger bonds with one another. Share verses like Jeremiah 29:12-13, Psalm 145:18-19, and 1 John 5:14-15. Strongly encourage, (but don't force), each member of the group to pray if and when they feel comfortable doing so.
2. **Share different examples of prayer.** Prayer can be a personal request, healing for another person, an exclamation of thanksgiving, adoration for God, and more. Some members may not feel comfortable sharing something from their personal lives, but they can thank God for something good that happened this week. Let you group know that there is no "right" way to prayer; simply bring your heart to God, and He'll hear you.
3. **Lead off prayer yourself.** Break the ice by leading off prayer. Don't be afraid to be vulnerable; if you set an example for the group, they'll be more likely to be authentic and real with their prayers.
4. **Turn on music.** There's nothing worse than the awkward silence when no one is praying. Play instrumental music on low volume to create a relaxing mood and fill in the gaps between members' prayers.
5. **Switch up prayer styles.** You don't have to stick to the conventional turn-by-turn prayer method. Consider trying one of these prayer styles with your group:
 - One-word prayers: members say one word (i.e., peace, healing, confidence) to express thanksgiving, requests, and adoration to God
 - Use the PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield) model
 - Have everyone pray at once. It may sound a bit chaotic, but this way no one feels singled out (and God still hears them all!).
 - Outdoor prayer walks
6. **Consider splitting into smaller groups.** If your group is larger than six or seven people, divide into smaller groups. These more intimate settings feel less

intimidating and create a sense of responsibility. If there are 10 people praying, a member believes the odds that one of the other nine saying something are high. But if there are only two or three others, they feel more compelled to contribute.

7. **Follow up next week.** Write down everyone's prayer requests and email them to the group, encouraging them to pray for one another. At the next session, find time to chat with each member one-on-one for status updates on their prayer. This shows that you care and took the time to think about and pray for them individually, which increases the likelihood they'll share again in the future.