

## Conversation Starters

- Do you pray regularly?
- Do you remember how you felt when you first prayed?

## Discuss

**Almost every person has prayed at some point in their lifetime. But do we know how we should pray when we do? Jesus's disciples asked him this same question, so Jesus gave us a guideline. Prayer should be:**

**1. Intimate.** Jesus used a term that no one had ever used for God before...it was very intimate and reflected a child-like nature to it. Do you think of God like this when you pray? Do you know this God?

**2. Expectant.** Jesus recognized God as the God in Heaven, capable of anything beyond what we could imagine. While God does not always answer how we would like, we should pray knowing He is all-powerful and sovereign. Do you believe in this God? Do you approach God with expectation or doubt?

**3. Reverent.** While we approach God in a child-like manner, we must be careful to still give God the honor that He deserves. We should be intimate, but not careless or nonchalant. In what ways do you show God honor when you pray?

**4. Submitted.** Jesus also reminds us to be submissive to God's desires, and not just focused on our own. He knows more about and cares for the whole world. It is easy to just focus on ourselves and current issues or challenges and forget there is a whole world of people out there. So God ultimately knows best. Do you pray and only think about yourself? Have you ever given thought to the world at large when you make your request to God? What struggles do you know of happening now in our world?

**5. Dependent.** Jesus was talking about more than food. Jesus asked us to start with the most fundamental of things, like food, and then include all else. For us, we need to remember that there is not a single thing in our life that we have that came about on our own. Do you pray about the everyday things in your life? What about the major challenges or decisions? Do you ever try to do everything on your own with no thought of God?

**6. Honest.** It is important for us to be authentic and not try to put up any walls or pretenses when we approach God. (He is already all-knowing.) When we mess up in life, keep in mind that it is only against Him that we sin. And He offers us unending love and grace. And we should use that grace that we receive and let that feed the forgiveness we should extend to others. Do you ever try to hide anything from God? Do you remember your life before Him? Is there someone you need to forgive in your life?

**7. Humble.** Finally, Jesus reminds us to remember where stand in relation to God and that we are not perfect; that we are weak and capable of falling into temptation. It's also a reminder that Satan is real and we need God to help us resist temptation. Do you pray for God's strength? Do you recognize that the challenges we have are a result of Satan's attempt to lure us away from God?

**Jesus’s instructions on how to pray are foundational. It is important to remember that prayer will only work if we actually do it. How often do you pray? Is this a discipline in your life?**

## **Next Steps**

Pray this week using the guidelines that Jesus gave us in the Sermon on the Mount.

### **How to Pray**

Date: December 3, 2018

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Location: North Charlotte Campus, 8335 Browne Road Charlotte, Charlotte, NC US 28269

Register: <https://mecklenburg.org/event/804009-2018-12-03-learning-to-pray/>

## **Further Reflection**

*See Matthew 6:7-15.*

## **Further Reading**

*The Prayer God Longs For* by James Emery White

## **Pray**

God, we want a real relationship with you. We often forget who you are, even when we approach you. We forget just how powerful and loving and wise and holy you are. We want to always know you as we should. Thank you for Jesus and the sacrifice that he has made to restore us into a relationship with you, allowing us to approach you like this. Help us to do our part to know you more.