

## Conversation Starters

- How have you tried to slow down this week?
- What are some things you rely on to get through your week?

## Discuss

Surveys show that most people pray. The reasons for praying vary – belief, obedience, trials, needs, etc. The Bible teaches that we should pray regularly and also makes some promises that are connected to prayer.

- When was the last time you prayed?
- Why do you pray?

With all that we know about prayer, it can still be hard to close the gap between theory and practice. It helps to start with **Who we are praying to**. The Bible teaches it is to God, who can be described as "a loving shepherd that can move mountains" that wants a relationship with us. This is what the Bible says about him:

- *God heals (Genesis 20:17)*
  - *God rescues. (Exodus 3:7-8)*
  - *God has power over death. (1 Kings 17:17,21-22)*
  - *God is mighty and sovereign. (1 Kings 18:36-38)*
  - *God cares about His followers. (Acts 12:1,4-5,7,11)*
- Is this the God that you know or have prayed to?
  - Do you ever stop to think about who God is before going into a time of prayer?

But still, if you know who God is, it can be hard to know what to say or how to say it. A good reminder is to talk simply and be real and honest. The goal in itself is not just to pray but to have a relationship with God.

- Do you have any preconceived notions about prayer that stop you from praying?
- Is your idea about prayer based on anything more than a relationship with God?
- Prior to a time of prayer, how can you remind yourself to simply talk with God?

## Next Steps

Take some time to pray this week. Here are some helpful tips:

1. **Manage your expectations.** It should be intimate, but not overcomplicated.
2. **Have a routine time.** Pick a time of day that will work best most often.
3. **Show up.** If you miss regularly, then change it up until you find what works.
4. **Limit distractions.** Go to a certain place where interruptions are limited.
5. **Persevere.** It will take time to get comfortable, but pushing through will be worth it.

## Further Reflection

*"You don't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible." (Matthew 17:20)*

*In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. (Jeremiah 29:12-13)*

## Pray

Adoration: Praise God for who he is and his sovereignty.

Confession: Share with God about your struggles with sin in your life.

Thanksgiving: Verbalize to God what you are grateful for in your life.

Supply: Present your requests to God.