

When Ordinary People Pray

INTRODUCTION

Prayer enables us to encounter God, to bring God into our everyday lives, a confession of my utter dependence upon Him. Don't underestimate prayer.

STUDY

Read James 5:16-18

Elijah had a nature just like us. He was an ordinary man with extraordinary answers to his prayer. He prayed prayers that stopped or brought rain.

Q. What answers to prayer have you experienced recently?

Q. What truths about prayer have you learned from the Word recently?

Q. What's working well in your prayer life at the moment? In what ways would you like to see it move forward?

Leaders Tip: With this question, once everyone has answered, you may like to get people to give tips about prayer that could help other group members' gain the improvements they are after.

1. The Form Prayer Takes

There's nothing boring or monotone about prayer and it is not a monologue. There are different forms of prayer identified below.

- Thanksgiving (Ps 100:4)
- Asking (1 John 5:14-15)
- Stillness (Ps 46:10)
- Meditation (Ps 119:48)
- A Desperate Cry (Ps 34:17-18)
- Prayer in the language of the Spirit (1 Cor 14:2)
- Worship (Ps 96:9)

Q. What forms of prayer do you use the most, and which one is the least? Why?

Activity Break up into pairs or small groups. Pick one of these forms of prayer. Read the scripture given above for that form. Pray together using that form. Come back together as a whole group. Each pair then to report on:

- What they experienced or discovered whilst praying like that.
- What the benefit or power is of praying like that
- Whether they need to pray like that more in their personal walks with God.

2. Effective Prayer Is:

Read James 5:16-18 again. This passage gives us a number of keys to effective prayer that are within reach of ordinary people like us.

a. **Transparent** (... confess your faults to each other...) We are not playing make-believe, not playing church. We are God's church and He sees us where we are at. Not trying to pretend before God, but authentic.

b. **Unselfish** (... pray for *one another* that *you* might be healed...) One of the ways to get God working in your own life is to pray for Him to move in other people's lives.

c. **Knows its Authority** (...powerful...) It's not eloquence, but the name of Jesus that makes prayer effective.

d. **Fervent** (...fervent...) "Fervent" means getting indignant about the enemy's activity and plans against you and the ones you love.

e. **The prayer of the Righteous** (...The prayer of a righteous person...) Prayer is not based on how good we are but on how good He is. Consider that righteousness is a gift according to the scripture and you are made righteous by what Jesus has done for us.

Q. How are each of these reflected in your prayer life at the moment?

Q. Is there one of these features in which your prayer life has grown recently? Describe what has changed, how and why. What difference has it made?

Q. Is there one of these features in which your prayer life needs to grow? How might you go about that?

Prayer Points:

- Pray for the new venue we are moving into.
- Pray for abundance in the church and great resources
- Pray for growth in leadership and the spirit of excellence and commitment to the work.

For Each Other

- Individual growth and success.
- Pray for the sick
- Pray for jobs and opportunities.