

Review your Experience with Prayer Practice 6 if you wish on October 25 in Community Groups as you Bridge to Prayer Cards in Lesson 8

1. Was it helpful for you to slow down with the Lord's Prayer? What value, if any, did you find in reading or repeating the Lord's Prayer?
2. What, if anything, did you learn about God or yourself through the exercise?
3. What value, if any, did you find in using the Lord's Prayer as a guide but using your own words?

Prayer Cards Introduction

Proverbs 21:5 "The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage,
But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty."

1. **Why do or don't you like to have a plan for things that are important to you?**
2. **How do you respond to systems or routines? What makes them helpful or unhelpful for you? What types of systems or routines have you used for prayer?**

1 Thessalonians 3:11 "Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; 12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; 13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."

3. **What does Paul ask God to do for the believers in Thessalonica, and what do his prayers reveal about his desires for them?**

A. "It is clear from Paul's description of his prayer life in his letters that he regularly prayed for an enormous number of people." (p. 228)

B. "It is clear from the love that pours out of Paul in letters such as 1 Thessalonians that Paul has been praying for them." (p. 228)

Lesson 8 Question to Answer: How do I use prayer cards to help me pray?

Lesson 8 Summary Statement: Because prayer is important, prayer tools can help us pray consistently, but we must guard against using them mechanically instead of engaging personally with God. (Chapters 28-29, Appendix from A Praying Life by Paul E. Miller) **Pick and choose what you use.**

Section 1: Creating Prayer Cards

C. **"There are many different prayer tools,** but in this final part of the book we'll look at just two: prayer journals and prayer cards." (p. 229)

4. What are some benefits of writing down our prayer requests?

D. “We will need to persist when prayer doesn’t feel natural, especially during the learning stage... Be careful of systems... None of us wants to be treated like robots—including God. He is, after all, a person.” (p. 229)

5. Have you ever felt unnatural or mechanical in prayer? What are some other things in life that initially felt unnatural but became more comfortable as you practiced them?

E. “All of us create systems with things that are important to us.” (p. 229-230)

F. Consider “Overall Guidelines” (p. 231)

- i. “The card functions like a prayer snapshot of a person’s life, so I use short phrases to describe what I want.”
- ii. “When praying, I usually don’t linger over a card for more than a few seconds. I just pick out one or two key areas and pray for them.”
- iii. “I put the Word to work by writing a Scripture verse on the card that expresses my desire for that particular person or situation.”
- iv. “The card doesn’t change much. Maybe once a year I will add another line. These are just the ongoing areas in a person’s life that I am praying for.”
- v. “I usually don’t write down answers. They are obvious to me since I see the card almost every day.” (Continued from G. The Overall Guidelines p. 231) (p. 232)
- vi. “I will sometimes date a prayer request by putting the month/year, as in 08/07.”

G. “Keep it simple. Don’t overthink it! Use tools that help you, and ignore those that don’t... Prayer cards are merely a snapshot of what you are asking of God, and of what Scriptures you are applying to particular people, circumstances, or concerns.” (p. 277)

- i. “Access other free resources at seeJesus.net/pages/a-praying-life.” (bottom of site)
- ii. “The following suggestions will help you develop your use of prayer cards to organize and focus your prayers.” (p. 277)

H. How to Create a Prayer Card

- i. “Label the card with a person’s name.” (p. 278)
- ii. “Jot down phrases that capture your concerns or what you want to ask for... consider the big picture of his or her influence, character, calling, faith...” (p. 278)
 - a. “What is this person facing? What is it like to be him or her?”
 - b. “How do I feel about this person in general and in this particular situation?”
 - c. “What would I like to see the Spirit do in his or her heart and character?”(p. 278)
- iii. “Put the Word to work by considering what particular Scripture you want to see working in that person’s life.” (p. 278)
- iv. “Slip into prayer for the person as you jot down short phrases to help you remember what you are asking.” (p. 279)

I. Start with Three to Four Daily Cards “I call these daily cards, because I pray the same cards every day. I suggest praying about a minute over each card.” (p. 279)

6. Which of Miller’s suggestions for creating and using prayer cards seems the most helpful to you? What questions or concerns do you have about putting these suggestions into practice?

J. Slowly Add Weekly Cards “I don’t recommend adding more than a card or two a week at the moment.” (p. 279)

K. Here are some suggested categories for weekly cards: (p. 279)

- i. “Family cards. One for each person in your family not featured in your daily cards.”
- ii. “People in suffering card. Keep it general; even a list of names works...”
- iii. “Friends card. List friends on one card, or create a card for each close friend.”
- iv. “Non-Christians card. Again, feel free to simply list them...” (p. 279)
- v. “Church leadership card. Your pastors...deacons, staff, lay leaders,” etc. (p. 280)
- vi. “Small Group card. Friends in your small group (Community Group) at church.”
- vii. “Missionaries Card. Names, locations, what they are facing.”
- viii. “World issues card. Terrorism, abortion, military conflicts, your country...burdens...”
- ix. “Work card.” Coworkers, “key projects, major decisions, difficult relationships.” (p. 280)
- x. “Repentance card. Sins that keep cropping up that you want help with.”
- xi. “Stewardship card. Use of time, talent, and treasure.”
- xii. “Thanking God card. Blessings you notice that you do not want to forget.”
- xiii. “Worship card. Scriptures or quotes that help you honor your Father.” (p. 280)

L. “I begin a prayer time with my daily cards, and then I add a few weekly cards to each day of the week.” (p. 280)

M. Regularly Create Cards for Yourself “Many of my prayer cards for myself emerge from my failures or weaknesses. That’s when I get desperate and ask God for help!” (p. 280)

N. Feel the Freedom “Track what God is doing... Modify the system in any way.” (281)

7. How do you decide what to prioritize in prayer when there are so many people and concerns you could pray for?

Section 2: Practice Prayer

In Community Group: Lead or delegate someone to pray, “Lord, help us use prayer tools in ways that glorify You and deepen our dependence on You. Keep us from becoming mechanical in prayer, and help us engage with You personally as we bring others and ourselves before You. Amen.”

Outside of Community Group:

Practice 8 The Week Following Community Group Lesson 8 (October 25)

Prayer Practice 8 Creating Prayer Cards (as described in Lesson 8)

If you have your own tool or practice that you want to describe or share with the group, prepare to do that.

The goal of Lesson 8 is not to get everyone using prayer cards, but **to help people develop a more consistent, personal life of prayer.** Prayer cards are one tool that can serve that goal.