

LifeGroup Study
UNSTUCK: Atomic Prayer
2022-01-30
Leader Notes

OVERVIEW: Welcome back to our LifeGroup study, Unstuck. This series is all about experiencing change in our lives. Talking and listening to God in prayer is a keystone habit. Keystone habits have the power to change everything else about our lives. In this week's study we'll explore what prayer is and how to structure and build a prayer life so that you can make prayer a daily dynamic conversation with God.

ICEBREAKER: My Early Memories of Prayer

What early memories do you have of prayer? Was prayer something you did in your family growing up? Do you remember one of your first prayers? Maybe prayer wasn't part of your earlier years and you're feeling new to prayer. **Share your story with the group.**

STUDY:

1. On Sunday, Pete talked about the value of prayer as a regular habit in our lives. He quoted Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit*, who talks about *keystone habits*, "small changes or habits that people introduce into their routines that unintentionally carry over into other aspects of their lives."
 - **How might prayer be a keystone habit?**
 - **Do you view prayer differently than you did years ago? Why or why not?**

JESUS TEACHES ON PRAYER – Matthew 6:5-15

In Matthew 6:5-15, Jesus teaches his followers about prayer. He warns them how not to pray and He gives them what we know today as The Lord's Prayer. In this prayer, Jesus gives us a wonderful model to guide our habit of prayer. As a group, read through Jesus' teaching on prayer in Matthew 6 and talk together about the themes and emphasis of the various components of The Lord's Prayer.

2. READ: Matthew 6:5-15

In verses 5-6 Jesus tells us we should not pray like "hypocrites". **What did He mean by this?**

LEADER NOTE: The Jews in Jesus' day prayed regularly at 9:00 am and 3:00 pm and had frequent times of public prayer. The hypocrites Jesus refers to were those who deliberately planned to be in public at those times so that they would be seen by everyone as they prayed. In this teaching, Jesus is not discouraging us from praying with other believers, rather, He is encouraging us to pray for the right reasons. Rather than praying to impress others, we pray to talk with and hear from God.

3. In verses 7-8, Jesus says we shouldn't "babble on" when we pray.
 - **What did He mean by this?**

LEADER NOTE: The Gentile prayers Jesus refers to here were likely based on the idea that merely repeating words or names of a deity over and over would somehow oblige the deity to respond. Greek prayers at times were filled with as many names for a deity as possible. These pagan prayers often reminded the deity of favours done or sacrifices offered, as if these words could somehow cajole or influence the deity for a favourable response.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Now let's consider the various components of Jesus' prayer and talk about how the value of each part can guide our habit of prayer.

4. READ: "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy." Vs. 9. NLT

Value: Focuses our attention on God .

- **Why is focusing our attention on God's holiness important when we pray?**

LEADER NOTE: Jesus began by focusing his attention on God. He draws our attention to the fact that God is our Heavenly Father who knows us and hears our prayers. This is an important way for us to pray because it reminds us of who God is. Jesus prays, "May your name be kept holy." This draws us to worship God. Beginning our prayers by lifting up God as our Heavenly Father honours Him and reminds us of his greatness and power.

5. READ: "May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Vs. 10 NLT

Value: Aligns our lives with His purpose.

- **Why is focusing on God's Kingdom an important part of our prayer habit?**

LEADER NOTE: When we pray for God's Kingdom to come, we align our lives and our will with His. Praying for God's Kingdom to come is to ask God's rule to prevail. We ask for His justice, righteousness, peace and mercy to be established in our world.

6. READ: "Give us today the food we need." Vs. 11 NLT

Value: Acknowledges our dependence on Him.

- **Why is acknowledging our dependence on God an important prayer habit?**

LEADER NOTE: This part of the prayer reminds us that God is our Provider. He is the one who supplies our daily needs. Rather than take our daily provision for granted, we honour God as the One that gives us life, strength and sustenance to live each day.

7. READ: "and forgive our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us." vs. 12 NLT

Value: Asks God to clean our hearts.

- **Why is forgiveness such an important part of our relationship with God?**

LEADER NOTE: Forgiveness is central to our relationship with God. Jesus died on the cross so we could be forgiven and made right with God. It is important to ask God to make us aware of our sin and to cleanse us (see Psalm 139:23-24, 1 John 1:8-9). God wants us to live in His forgiveness by freely forgiving one another.

8. READ: "And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one." Vs. 14-15 NLT

Value: Asks for God's protection and help.

- **Why is asking for God's help and protection a crucial habit?**

LEADER NOTE: The Bible tells us we have a spiritual enemy, Satan, who wants to destroy us (see 1 Peter 5:8). Giving in to temptation leads to sin and eventually death (see James 1:14-15). Asking for God's protection and help reminds us we need God's power to overcome. (see Ephesians 6:10-12).

9. Look back at the components of the Lord's Prayer and think about your prayer life.

- **What components might be missing from your prayers? What might you add or emphasize more in your prayers?**

- **How might you begin to make a habit of praying like Jesus prayed?**

EXPERIENCE GOD

The Lord's Prayer – Hillsong worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUjLd6k6uXk>

Listen to this song together. Close your eyes and take in the meaning of the words.

How did this experience speak to you?

PRAYER

Please pray for the Cymbaluk family, our global missionaries in Greece serving with Avant. Gary sends the following requests.

- Pray for wisdom as Marina and I make travel plans. We will plan several international trips together while the children remain based in Athens.
- Pray for the former Muslims who we are taking through baptism class. Pray they wouldn't be tripped up by the enemy.
- Praise God 19 former Muslims(in rural Uganda) accepted Christ through our Avant colleague's ministry(we are the Avant's Africa Ministry Directors).