

PRAXIS

Teach us
to pray



PRAXIS

HOW TO USE

This discussion guide is designed for you, leaders, to guide your group through this Praxis video series. This series is structured as a conversation based around engaging questions intended to promote thought-provoking discussion throughout each episode. When these questions pop up on the screen, hit pause and turn the question to the group. **Each episode includes the following:**

BIG IDEA

We highlight the big idea behind the episode, emphasizing key scriptures or quotes, to give you and your group an idea of what will be covered in the video. Feel free to share this before pressing play, or after to summarize what was taught into a concise thought.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

If the video question does not invite participation, use these questions to promote further interest. These questions are simply reworded to present the idea in a different way. We invite you to be creative and present the questions in a way that engages your group.

DISCUSS

The video questions are created to encourage conversation and to allow the formation of thoughts and ideas – inviting participants to wrestle with and begin sharing their beliefs and experiences. This is just the beginning. The discussion questions exist to go deeper and to invite more intimate and transformational conversation.

CONTEXT

IN A CHURCH OR LARGE GROUP SETTING

This guide is designed to be used by a leader, so begin by identifying those leaders and getting a guide into each of their hands. If you are watching the episodes with more than 20 people, we would advise identifying multiple leaders and having them focus on a section of the group. When the video questions arise, have them turn to their “small group” and discuss the questions openly. Time dependent, ask each smaller group to share with the larger group what was shared. This invites more people to share without the intimidation of a large group setting. Whether you keep these groups consistent from week to week, or you mix it up, remaining the same for the discussion portion of each episode will allow for greater depth and increased transparency.

IN A SMALL GROUP SETTING

Every leader in the room should have one of these guides prior to beginning the video. It can be helpful to identify one leader as the facilitator, and others as helpers. The facilitator can guide the video question time, with helpers stepping in as needed based on the direction of conversation. Come discussion time, gathering into small groups where one or two leaders oversee a small group can invite quieter participants to engage and allow for greater depth of conversation.

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

While this discussion guide is designed with group participation in mind, the content is something we believe is valuable for every individual. We advise watching these episodes with a pen in hand and paper before you. Have your Bible handy and get ready to pause the video. You get to take this at your pace! When Scripture is referenced, open your Bible and read along – when questions are asked, hit pause and write out your answer. If questions arise in your mind that you are unable to answer, write them down to ask later.

GET READY

Take a breath, the pressure is off. We are not asking you to teach, or to have the answer to every question. Your role is to guide, facilitate, but most importantly to **listen** and **invite**.

Invite questions. Invite conversation.

This discussion guide was created to provide direction for the conversation, but not to limit or harness the group. During the video, listen to what the participants say. Do not feel the need to answer the question yourself. Be comfortable with silence. Give it fifteen seconds before you use a supporting question. Let them think.

“When will I know when to press play again?” Trust me, you’ll know. Conversation will end, or you may even have to re-focus the group if they go down a rabbit trail. If a valuable question or topic is sparked during the video, write it down and say you will return as a group to it during the discussion time.

When it comes time for discussion, follow the pace of the group. Let them naturally guide the conversation around what content stuck out from the video, or what questions were sparked for them. You are not confined to the questions in this guide. Pick the ones that stand out to you or add your own. This time will look different for each group and that’s intentional.

Listen and Invite.

TEACH US TO PRAY

FOUR EPISODES | PRAXIS SERIES 11

BIG IDEA

This series comes out of the question the disciples ask Jesus in Luke 11. Their desire is to know how to pray. They ask, “teach us to pray.” And our heart for this series would be the same posture – teach us to pray.

It is our desire that at the end of this series there would be a renewed sense of purpose in your prayer life. As we journey together, we hope that we can help you find some peace and clarity in some of the questions that you undoubtedly have about prayer. We say this not from a place of having all the answers, but as people who have wrestled with prayer and what to invite you into that wrestling.

TEACH US TO PRAY

EPISODE 1 | WHY DO WE PRAY?

BIG IDEA

Addressing the question, “why do we pray?” this episode explores the impact our prayers can have. Together, we discover that deep, fervent prayer has the power to change God’s course of action. Our prayers can make an eternal difference!

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Exodus 32:11-14: But Moses tried to pacify the Lord his God. “O Lord!” he said. “Why are you so angry with your own people whom you brought from the land of Egypt with such great power and such a strong hand? Why let the Egyptians say, ‘Their God rescued them with the evil intention of slaughtering them in the mountains and wiping them from the face of the earth’? Turn away from your fierce anger. **Change your mind** about this terrible disaster you have threatened against your people! Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You bound yourself with an oath to them, saying, ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven. And I will give them all of this land that I have promised to your descendants, and they will possess it forever.’” **So the Lord changed his mind** about the terrible disaster he had threatened to bring on his people.

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: “Just because God changed His plan of action, doesn’t mean God Himself changed at all. Both outcomes would have been equally in line with who He is.”

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: “See, I believe every prayer we pray will be answered. I don’t believe they will all be answered in the way that we want them to be answered, but they **will be** answered.”

James 5:16: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Evelyn Underhill: “If God were small enough to be understood, He would not be big enough to be worshipped.”

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: “Just because we can’t fully understand it, doesn’t mean we shouldn’t fully embrace it.”

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What are some of the questions that you have about prayer? What does your prayer life look like right now?**
 - What questions have others asked you about prayer?
 - What is your personal prayer pattern like? When do you pray?
- **Do you believe that God changes His mind? Why or why not?**
 - Can we change God's mind with our prayers? How?
 - What impact do our prayers have on God's plan of action?
- **What has God not yet done because you have not yet prayed?**
 - What is something you have not prayed for?
 - What types of thoughts prevent us from bringing certain things to God in prayer?

DISCUSS

- **Do you believe that your prayers make a difference? How does your answer to this question impact your motivation to pray?**
 - **What prayers has God already answered that you have not yet given Him credit for?**
 - **How does it make you feel that we will never fully understand or comprehend prayer? How do your questions about prayer make you feel?**
 - **If someone were to ask you, "what impact does prayer have?" How would you answer them?**
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NEXT STEPS

Take time as a group, to pray for the things discussed or brought to mind by the question - "What has God not yet done because you have not yet prayed?" Pray for the things you have yet to pray for!

TEACH US TO PRAY

EPISODE 2 | WHO WE PRAY TO

BIG IDEA

As seen in the Lord's prayer, we are to begin with a heart posture that says: I trust you, because you are the Holy one, the one who is sovereign, and supreme, and set apart. You are the king, who is coming, and you are the one whose will, and plan, is infinitely better than any I could hope or imagine

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:9-10: "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Revelation 21:1-4: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth has disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: "In this teaching on Prayer, Jesus tells the disciples to pray that "God's name would be kept holy". Another way to read this would be: **"God, as the one who is Holy, we pray that you will be seen as Holy, and treated as Holy by everyone in every corner of the earth"**. Jesus is saying – God, keep your holiness in front of us. Remind us of it, don't let us forget that you are Holy, set apart, divine, different, and bigger than all else. It is a way to posture our hearts towards a God who is not just our buddy, but the one who is LORD of everything. That we would never forget his Holiness.

Luke 22:42: "Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: "We start with a heart posture that says: I trust you, because you are the Holy one, the one who is sovereign, and supreme, and set apart. You are the king, who is coming, and you are the one whose will, and plan, is infinitely better than any I could hope or imagine."

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What is the majority of your time praying dedicated towards? What do you pray for?**
 - If you were to record your prayers and sort them out, what would majority of your time be dedicated towards?
 - What is the number one thing you pray for the most?
- **How does it make you feel that by praying you actually have the power to usher along God's coming Kingdom?**
 - What does it mean to usher along God's coming Kingdom?
 - Does this knowledge, that you can usher along God's Kingdom in prayer, make you feel like your prayers are more powerful? Why?
 - What questions do you have about how we usher God's Kingdom through prayer?
- **What does it mean for you to pray "not my will but yours be done?" Does a specific situation in your life come to mind?**
 - What thoughts prevent you from saying "I want you God to lead, because you know better. You have the ultimate plan. You can see the end, which I simply cannot. So I trust you"?
 - What area in your life are you struggling to release to God – where it's hard for you to say, "in this situation, not my will but yours be done?"

DISCUSS

- **What has your experience with, and understanding of, the Lord's prayer been? Where and in what ways have you used this prayer?**
 - **How can we approach God both as Dad, and our Sovereign God? As friend and Lord of everything?**
 - **How can we practically help one another remember that God's perspective is greater than ours?**
 - **What roles does trust have in our prayer of "not my will but yours be done?"**
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NEXT STEPS

As a group, spend time praying together focusing on situations in your lives where you need to pray "not my will but yours be done" – situations where you need to surrender your ideal plan.

TEACH US TO PRAY

EPISODE 3 | WHAT WE PRAY FOR

BIG IDEA

What we ask God for, should be in line with what a holy God would want for His children. Our requests for provision, forgiveness, and protection should be aligned with God's will for our lives, not our own will for our lives.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:11-13: “Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”

Video quote – Brody Jespersen: “Jesus teaches those who were closest to him, that every day we need to come to God to receive forgiveness. Why? **Because he knows that perfection is not a possibility.** Regardless of who we are, or what we think we'll be able to accomplish, we still daily need to frame our prayers around the need to be forgiven. We need ongoing forgiveness from God for our mistakes and broken choices. This is a lifelong process. See, faith is not about my ability to strive for perfection, instead it is all about my humble acknowledgement and dependence on a forgiving and gracious God.”

Matthew 6:14-15: “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Video quote – Brody Jespersen: “First Jesus asks us to pray against temptation. Against those things that lure us to make choices that ultimately lead us back to the place of needing forgiveness again. He prays that we would get to the root of that which causes us to stumble, and that we would be kept from it, and to be made stronger so we can face it. To break the cycle, so we pray for protection from temptation, but also – from the evil one. From the enemy. From God's adversary, the devil and his dominion. Jesus teaches that the devil wants you to stumble. He wants you to fail and to fall. And he is working tirelessly and endlessly to trip you up.”

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What needs could you bring before God today?**
 - What “daily bread” are you in need of?
 - Does presenting your needs to God come naturally, or is this act challenging for you? Why?
- **Is asking forgiveness part of your regular prayer rhythm? Why or why not?**
 - Do you struggle with seeking forgiveness? Or does this come naturally? Why?
 - Is granting forgiveness part of your day to day life? Why or why not?
- **When faced with temptation what is your immediate response? What role does prayer play?**
 - What do you naturally do when tempted?
 - How are we to pray when faced with temptation?

DISCUSS

- **Do you trust God as your provider? Do you believe you can be dependent on Him to provide? Why or why not?**
 - **Why are we to forgive others? Is this something you can do with ease, or that you struggle with? Why?**
 - **Why does getting to the root of what causes us to stumble key in growing stronger to face temptation? How can we do this?**
 - **How is the Lord’s prayer different from the prayers you currently pray? How will it shape the way that you pray?**
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NEXT STEPS

Within your group, separate into smaller groups based on which area of prayer you struggle with most: presenting needs, seeking forgiveness, or facing temptation – pray for one another for strength to grow in this area. If comfortable, share what you’re currently needing provision for, forgiveness from, or strength to resist temptation from.

TEACH US TO PRAY

EPISODE 4 | HOW DO WE PRAY?

BIG IDEA

What we ask God for, should be in line with what a holy God would want for His children. Our requests for provision, forgiveness, and protection should be aligned with God's will for our lives, not our own will for our lives.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:5-8: “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!”

Video quote – Brody Jespersen: “Prayer, Jesus is teaching, is not about what others think, but it is about a **conversation** between you and your father in heaven... Jesus is teaching that prayer is to be between you and God.”

Luke 18:9-14: Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Psalms 116:1-2: I love the Lord because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What thoughts run through your mind before you pray out loud with others?**
 - What has your experience with praying out loud with others been?
 - Do you ever pray out loud when you are alone? Why or why not? How could doing this more frequently impact your approach to collective prayer?
- **How does God's posture towards you impact how you pray?**
 - Re-read Psalm 116:1-2, what does this verse teach us about who God is, and how we can approach Him in prayer?
 - When you close your eyes and imagine God, what posture is He in? Does this posture align with a God who desires to listen to you?
- **What has your experience with hearing God's voice been?**
 - Have you ever heard God's voice? How did you hear Him?
 - Do you believe that God speaks? Why or why not?

DISCUSS

- **How can we dispel some of the fear around praying out loud with others?**
 - **What shifts in how we pray when we think about it as time simply spent with God having a conversation?**
 - **If God knows what we are going to pray for before we even speak it, why pray? What is our motivation?**
 - **What is one practical thing you can do today to create enough space and time for prayer?**
 - **What has your greatest take away from this series been? How has your prayer life changed?**
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NEXT STEPS

Split into smaller groups of two or three within your larger group and pray together. Simply, humbly, and honestly pray to God for one another. Spend time with God – speaking and listening.