

10 Creative Prayer Exercises (Developed by Tami Rudkin, www.SmallGroups.com)

PRAYER EXERCISE: I PRAISE YOU BECAUSE...

Leader: Take the following phrases and cut them into individual strips of paper. Hand these out as your group members come in. If there are more phrases than group members, give each person 2 or more. Praise is not a thank you but an acknowledgement of who God is. Take time to praise God before you study about him, thank him, or petition him. We must constantly remind ourselves that God is awesome and glorious. When we do that, our hearts are molded to a way of living and loving.

Have your group take a minute and elaborate on what some of these phrases mean. You may say something like, "What does your phrase mean to you personally." OR, "If you really believed this phrase, how would you live your life differently?"

Lastly, take turns reading these phrases of praise out loud to the Lord. You may finish by praying a prayer of praise to God. I praise you because...

- I praise you because You are Wonderful... you are full of wonder.
- I praise you because You are the Lion of Judah... you cannot be tamed.
- I praise you because You are the I AM.... You are everything.
- I praise you because You are the Counselor... probing and guiding.
- I praise you because You are the Creator... the maker of the heavens and the earth.
- I praise you because You are Almighty... you have the power to heal the body and the mind.
- I praise you because You are the Lord... good and fair and worthy of our labor.
- I praise you because You are the Bread of Life... you sustain me and give me what I need to live each day.
- I praise you because You are the Alpha and Omega... where I begin and where I end.
- I praise you because You are my high place... I hide in your shadows and take rest in your strength.
- I praise you because You are King of Kings... you are powerful and awesome... I must kneel in your presence.
- I praise you because You are able... you are huge and you can do anything, anytime.
- I praise you because You are the Deliverer... you have freed me from my oppressors.

PRAYER EXERCISE: THE REASON YOU ARE MY GOD

Write the following incomplete phrases on small pieces of paper (one phrase per paper). If you have a big group you may need to use the phrases more than once or write more of your own. Put them in a hat or bowl and pass it to each person. Have each person take one. Encourage your group to complete their phrase and then ask them (but always allow a person to pass) to pray their phrase.

- I love you Lord because...
- I need you Lord because...

- I praise you Lord because...
- I obey you Lord because...
- I thank you Lord because...
- I hope in you Lord because...
- I trust in you Lord because...
- I find joy in you Lord because...
- I find peace in you Lord because...

IN CLOSING: Leader, after everyone has prayed their praise pray something like:

“Father God, these are reasons you are our God. You have promised us that no matter how deep the stain of our sins, you can remove it. You can make us as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if we are stained as red as crimson, you can make us as white as wool. We know that our obedience counts, and so we obey. We trust that you will help us and that there will always be enough to sustain us. Lord, many are the reasons we serve you, love you, thank you, need you and find our joy in you. We praise you and give you thanks.” Amen

–taken from Isaiah 1:18-20

PRAYER EXERCISE: I GO TO THE ROCK

What you need:

- Index card for each person
- The largest rock you can bring in or a huge drawing of a rock.
- Copies of the reading

READ Joshua 3:14-4:7

1. We, by our remembrances and thanksgiving, are going to build a monument of praise. Like it was for Joshua, it is imperative to recognize and remember the awesome things God has done in our lives.
2. On your index card I want you to write about one way God has blessed you or answered a prayer or provided help to you.
3. Come up and tape that praise to this rock... our rock.(Play some music)
4. Encourage your people to be ready to add to this monument of praise each week.Let it be a reminder of what God is doing in your midst.

READ THE FOLLOWING:

Leader: You are the rock of my salvation. I hide in you, I stand on you, I hope in you, I long for you and I trust in you.

Group: You are the rock of my salvation.

Leader: When it feels like life is but a cauldron of chaos and confusion

Group: I go to the rock.

Leader: When I question my purpose and get lost in the mundane mandates of living.

Group: I go to the rock.

Leader: When foolishness is threatening my sanity and peace of mind

Group: I go to the rock.

Leader: When there is no one I can count on, no one to pour out my soul to, no one I can trust

Group: I go to the rock.

Leader: When perfection is expected and I simply can't live up to it,

Group: I go to the rock.

Leader: When the turmoil of the world terrorizes my soul,

Group: I go to the rock.

Leader: When injustice seems to be applauded and corruption so easily ignored,

Group: I go to the rock.

Leader: For the rock stands solid. He will not be moved, nor destroyed, nor swayed, nor changed. Even when the earth trembles beneath our feet, Our Rock, never gives way. He is strong, he is true, and he is always able.

Group: Thank God! We can go to the rock!

PRAYER EXERCISE: POST IT PRAISE

What you need to bring:

- Large poster board
- Post-it notes of varying colors and sizes

1. READ, or have someone read, the following Psalm:

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.

[2] Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.

[3] Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

[4] Look to the Lord and his strength;
seek his face always.

[5] Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced. Psalm 105:1-5

2. Give each of your group members a number of Post-it notes (5 to 10). Place the poster board in the middle of the room on the floor or with the permission of your host hang it on a wall.

3. Have your group members think back on the last month or so. For what are they thankful?

4. Ask them to write one praise on each Post-it note and then place them on the poster board.

5. In closing, refer back to the scripture, Psalm 105. What are the instructions of this passage?

Give thanks

Call on his name

Tell of his wonderful acts

Sing to him

Rejoice

Seek his face always
Remember what he has done

6. Take a moment to read the Post-it praises as a prayer.

7. Lastly, challenge your group to buy (or give them some) more Post-it notes and every time God does something wonderful in their lives have them write on a Post-it note and put it on their desk, bathroom mirror, or refrigerator. It will be a reminder to always praise God.

PRAYER EXERCISE: THE GREATNESS OF QUIETNESS

Leader, say something like: To be quiet is to be in a state of gentle stillness. It is in this state that your mind can relax because there is not all kinds of sensory input. Your body can then follow suit and your muscles loosen up. When you fully enter into a state of quietness, it is there that you let go of those things that are weighing you down. You can give up the struggle for control. You can release the notion that you must know everything right now! You can see God's face more clearly and hear His word to you more plainly.

Today we are going to take a few minutes and practice the discipline of quietness. You can stay where you are seated, or you can move to another place here or outside. Get comfortable and stay put once you find your place. Take out your Bible and read the following Psalms and allow God to renew you and refresh you in this time of quietness.

- Psalm 4
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 46

Leader: After about 10 minutes call your group back together. Ask them about this experience. Was it difficult to get quiet? How long was it before you actually could relax? Why is it important to spend time in quietness?

In closing read the following and then pray.

Proof Of Greatness In Quietness

Around the great issues of life there is quietness. Silence characterizes the highest in art and the deepest in nature. The surest spiritual search is made in silence. Moses learned in Midian, and Paul in Arabia, what would have eluded them in the busy haunts of men.

Silence reaches beyond words. The highest point in drama is silence. The most valid emotions do not cry aloud. The most effective reproof is not a tongue lashing. The most poignant grief is not expressed in loud shriekings. The sincerest sympathy is not noisy. The best preparation for an emergency is quietness.

The best proof of greatness is silence. The great engine is almost noiseless, but the cheap model is a "rattletrap." The best proof of confidence is silence. The man who is confident of his position does not strive, nor cry aloud, nor try to explain everything.

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15).
—Gospel Herald

PRAYER EXERCISE: OUR GOD IS CLOSE

Our God is not a far away, somewhere in the sky, kind of God. He does not rule from a throne placed out of reach, but rules from a throne within in our hearts. He is close. When we are in trouble, He is close. When we are laughing, He is close. When we are alone, He is close. When we are in a crowd, He is close.

1. Assign the following scriptures to different readers in your group. Have them read their passages out loud for the group. Make a note to the group that God is close to us. Jeremiah 23:23-24; Isaiah 40:10-11; Psalm 34:1-20
2. Ask your group, "What is usually happening around you, or to you, when you most feel that God is close? Is it during happy times, sad times, trying times?" Do not allow them to answer now; you are simply getting the thought process started.
3. Give each person a piece of paper and a pen/pencil.
4. Ask your group to close their eyes and sit for a few minutes, reflecting on a time or times when they sensed that God was close to them. You may want to play instrumental music quietly while you are reflecting.
5. Encourage the group members to write down what they remember about that specific time, what was happening, and how they sensed God was near, etc. If they so choose, they could draw a picture instead of writing.
6. After about 5-10 minutes, ask if anyone would be willing to share what he or she wrote or drew.
7. Read together the following responsive praise prayer from Psalm 34. The leader reads the bold, and the participant reads the regular font.

**I will bless God every chance I get;
my lungs expand with His praise.**
I live and breathe God who is close by.

God has met me more than halfway, and He has freed me from my anxious fears.
I live and breathe God who is close by.

When I was desperate, I called out and God got me out of a tight spot.
I live and breathe God who is close by.

His angels set up a circle of protection around us while we pray. We will open our eyes and see—how good God is.
I live and breathe God who is close by.

Blessed are we if we run to Him.
I live and breathe God who is close by.

**God keeps an eye on his friends; His ears pick up every moan and groan.
Is anyone crying for help? God is listening, ready to rescue you.**
I live and breathe God who is close by.

If your heart is broken, you will find God right there. If you are kicked in the gut, He will help you catch your breath. God is there every time.

I live and breathe God who is close by.

Thank God, praise God, love this mighty God who is close by.

Amen.

PRAYER EXERCISE: IN LIGHT OF THE CROSS

You will need:

- A votive candle for each person in your group
- A lighter or matches

LEADER:

1. Arrange 12-15 votive candles in the form of a cross (you may want to put the candles on squares of paper or a paper plate).

2. READ the excerpt below and ask your group members to pray out loud and then light their candles. If you have a small group, you may want to have some pray more than once (and light another candle) so that the cross will be completely lit when you are finished. You lead by praying a very simple sentence prayer which will give others some assurance that they do not have to pray long prayers. Always allow for those who will not want to pray out loud by telling them that if they feel uncomfortable they may pray silently and then light a candle or two.

3. Allow for silence in between prayers.

The cross is, by far, the most recognized Christian symbol in the world. On the cross, Jesus Christ finished the ugly business of sin and condemnation. When once man wondered what he could do or give that would put him in right standing with God, now he can simply stand in the shadow of the cross. From the cross His grace, that unmerited favor, shines on us who choose to believe. Our shackles are broken and our hearts restored.

Without the Lamb, the perfect sacrifice, nailed to the cross, we would not be here today, and so we give thanks.

Look at the cross for a moment. The upright piece of the cross points to the sky. Christ was high and lifted up. Still today, we look up to see his majesty.

Now look at the vertical piece of the cross. It stretches from east to west. It reminds us of the stretched open arms of Christ - arms to embrace the whole world.

I would like for you to pray today in one of two ways. Pray a simple sentence prayer of thanks for what Jesus did for you on the cross, or take a moment to pray for those in your life who need to come to Christ.

After you have prayed, please light a candle on the cross.

If you pray a "thank you" prayer, light a candle that is in the horizontal line of the cross.

If you pray a "request" for salvation, please light a candle in the vertical line of the cross.

Let's pray. . .

PRAYER EXERCISE: WITH GREAT LOVE

Leader say:

Worship is a lifestyle.

What kind of worship does the Lord require? Does He demand great acts of self sacrifice or simple acts of humility? So often we believe that loving God and living a life of worship is one monumental act after another. Consequently, most of us give up. We know we aren't up to the task of living large all the time!

Mother Teresa once said, "We can do no great things—only small things with great love." Isn't our worship of the Lord God Almighty about love, love for Him and love for one another? It is indeed. Our worship is not about big acts...but all the seemingly insignificant things we do in love.

Take a minute and make a list of all the activities you are involved in on any given day. List your work and your chores around the house and the driving you do to get your kids from place to place. List them all.

Leader: give 3-5 minutes to do this

Leader say:

Now, I want to take a few minutes of silent prayer. Let's renew our commitment to live our lives as worship. Pray that God will bless our acts of living worship and that we will do everything in love, no matter what it is.

Leader: close this time of silent prayer by speaking a word of prayer for your group.

PRAYER EXERCISE: THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

The Most Important Thing

Leader read: Our spiritual act of worship is doing as Jesus commanded. Our obedience is a direct reflection of what is in our hearts. It shows the world the depth of our love for God and for others.

What did Jesus tell us to do? Love. It is simple... not a bunch of do's and don'ts, just love.

Jesus was asked, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:36-40 (NIV)

My biggest question, knowing how unloving I can be sometimes, is this: How do I love?

The apostle Paul has so beautifully told us how to love, how to offer God our worship on a daily basis with those we come in contact with each day.

1. If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate.
2. If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing.
3. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.
4. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head,
5. Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
6. Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
7. Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end. 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 (MSG)

Leader: Pass out the following reading based on the love chapter you just read. Have people take turns reading a paragraph until the end. Then, take a few minutes to allow people to offer God their thanks for the kind of love that was shown to them by God.

- We must be patient. We cannot weary of people and their inconsistencies.
- Without complaining we must wait for them to become all that they can become.
- Love is thoughtful. We must be kind, tenderhearted, and always gently compassionate with people's hearts.
- The people in our lives are not objects to be possessed or manipulated. We have no desire to tether them to the mundane or the mediocre. We should enjoy seeing them fly in their faith.
- Love is not arrogant and full of oneself. Our call to love means to pour ourselves out in service to those in our care.
- We are never rude or self-seeking. In love we listen to their thoughts, but see their hearts. We do not demand cooperation or even love in return. We will walk side by side in friendship.
- Love is not easily angered. Even though someone may be thoughtless, we must choose not to keep a list by which to condemn him/her. We cannot say, "Told you so," or hold their failures over their heads.

- As ambassadors of Jesus, we value truth and we will celebrate when our friends and family walk in what they know to be that truth.
- Love always protects. There are times those we care for will be vulnerable, and we must be a place they can run. In the raging storms of life we must be a calm safe harbor.
- We must be people of trust. Even when our loved ones are questioning themselves, we must stand by them and believe in their integrity. They will sense our trust and live up to it.
- Love always hopes for the best. We should anticipate great things from others and expect them to happen. We will hope for their true joy, a peace beyond understanding, love undying. We will hope for all good things for those we love.
- We must always persevere. Even when people do not show up, or tend to complain, or choose to be self centered, we must stay the course, walk the extra mile, and stand by them when everyone else turns and walks away.
- Love never fails. When every worldly philosophy is disfigured by flaws, and grand governments have collapsed, and churches dissolved, and friends, smocked in human frailties, have disappointed us, we must rely on a God, on a Father, who never fails.
- After all is said and done, our greatest accomplishments matter little if we have not loved. For love is the most important thing.

PRAYER EXERCISE: A LIFE OF GOD-WORSHIP

Living a life of God-worship is what it is all about for the Christ-follower. It is imperative that our small group understands what living in worship is and what it is not. This passage from The Message is a beautiful, practical view of the life of a worshiper.

To begin:

1. Ask your group to share what they worry about most.
2. Ask them what a life of worship looks like in day to day living?
3. Read the following passage.
4. Ask: According to this passage what does a life of worship look like?
5. Ask: What is the promise of this passage?
6. Read verse 34 again and ask your group to give “praise” for what God is doing right now in their lives.
7. Have each person pray a one sentence “thanks” prayer.
8. Leader closes in prayer.

Matthew 6:25-34

[25] "If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. [26] Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.

[27] "Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? [28] All this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, [29] but have you ever seen color and design

quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

[30] "If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? [31] What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. [32] People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. [33] Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

[34] "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.