

# Pray First

Small Group  
HOST GUIDE

 church on the rock

# PrayFirst

## Week 1

### CATCHING UP

What are you hoping to get out of this study, Pray First?

### Focus Verse

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Luke 11:1 KJV

### What does it mean to Pray First?

- 1 Praying first is having a **lifestyle of prayer**.
- 2 Praying first is our **first response** to life circumstances.
- 3 Praying first is **speaking** the **Word of God**.

### What is my prayer life connected to?

- 1 My **spiritual strength** and **stamina**.
- 2 My **sustaining power** through every season of life.
- 3 My **joy levels**.

And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

Luke 18:1 KJV

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

Proverbs 24:10 KJV

### What is prayer?

Prayer is **communication with God**.

Jesus said, "We ought to have a prayer life and it ought to be disciplined, intentional, organized, and structured."

In our relationship with God, we need the Word and we need prayer.

## Discovery Questions

1 What does it mean to Pray First?

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2 What are ways you remove obstacles that hinder your prayer life?

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3 What can you do this week to be more disciplined, intentional, organized, and structured in your prayer life?

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## Diving Deeper

- Read the Focus Verse, Luke 11:1, every day this week as part of your daily devotions. Challenge yourself to have the verse memorized before your next Small Group meeting.
- Share with someone outside of your Small Group one thing that you learned this week.
- Invite a friend to your next Small Group meeting.
- Invite people from your Small Group to sit together during a Sunday service.

# PrayFirst

## Week 2

### CATCHING UP

Share one meaningful thing that you learned last week from this study, Pray First.

### Focus Verse

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Luke 11:1 KJV

### What is prayer?

Prayer is **communication with God**.

#### My faith will never be any stronger than my prayer life.

My faith is on the same level of my fellowship with God. My faith level will never outgrow my fellowship level.

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless, I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

2 Timothy 1:12 KJV

### Takeaways

Having strong faith starts with knowing, then believing, and being fully persuaded.

Every success in life has to be built on the foundation of prayer.

### Ways to build a strong prayer life:

- 1 Need a **place** to pray every day.
- 2 Need a **certain time** when you pray.
- 3 Need a **process**.
- 4 Need a **pattern**. *The Lord's Prayer is a pattern.*
- 5 Need a **plan**.

- 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
- 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
- 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
- 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

## Discovery Questions

- 1 What are some ways you build your faith through prayer?

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- 2 How can you develop a stronger prayer life?

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- 3 What does your Personal Growth Plan look like?

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## Diving Deeper

- Read the Focus Verse, Luke 11:1, every day this week as part of your daily devotions. Challenge yourself to have the verse memorized before your next Small Group meeting.
- Journal ways you are building a stronger prayer life.
- Find a Bible Reading Plan and commit to it.
- Invite people from your Small Group to sit together during a Sunday service.

# PrayFirst

## Week 3

### CATCHING UP

Share one thing that you applied last week to develop a stronger prayer life.

### Focus Verse

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Luke 11:1 KJV

### How to have an effective prayer life:

- 1 Know who God **is**.
- 2 Know what God **said**.
- 3 Know God's **principles**.
- 4 Know how God **works**.

If ye abide in me,  
and my words abide in you,  
ye shall ask what ye will,  
and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:7 KJV

### Takeaways

When you know how God operates, you get answers to your prayers.

God's word is God's will.

### How to know God more:

- 1 Know God through **fellowship**.
- 2 Know God through **His Word**.

<sup>13</sup> These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

<sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

1 John 5:13-14 KJV

## Discovery Questions

- 1 How are you developing an effective prayer life?

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- 2 What does "fellowship with God" mean to you?

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- 3 How do you build momentum in your prayer life through being consistent?

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## Diving Deeper

- Read the Focus Verse, Luke 11:1, every day this week as part of your daily devotions. Challenge yourself to have the verse memorized before your next Small Group meeting.
- Journal ways on how you are developing an effective prayer life.
- Designate an area in your home to be your personal "prayer closet" or "prayer room."
- Be contagious and invite one person to get plugged into a Small Group with you.

# PrayFirst

## Week 4

### CATCHING UP

Share one thing you implemented last week to build momentum in your prayer life.

### Focus Verse

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Luke 11:1 KJV

### What does prayer do?

- 1 Prayer **moves** the **hand of God**.
- 2 Prayer **opens the door** for God to move.

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Matthew 21:22 KJV

### What is a **believing** prayer?

A **believing** prayer starts with the **right thinking**.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:7 KJV

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Mark 11:24 KJV

### Takeaways

When you pray first, you are inviting God to get involved.

The prerequisite for receiving from God is believing.

You believe when you pray.

## Discovery Questions

- 1 How does praying open the door for God to move in your life or circumstances?

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- 2 What does a “believing prayer” mean to you?

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- 3 What is the prerequisite for receiving from God?

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## Diving Deeper

- Read the Focus Verse, Luke 11:1, every day this week as part of your daily devotions. Challenge yourself to have the verse memorized before your next Small Group meeting.
- Read scriptures from the Bible that promise provision.
- Write three scriptures in your journal that promise provision. Say the scriptures out loud daily.
- Invite a friend to your next Small Group meeting.

# PrayFirst

## Week 5

### CATCHING UP

Share one way praying first changed the way you respond to situations.

### Focus Verse

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Luke 11:1 KJV

### What are enemies to prayer?

- 1 Unforgiveness
- 2 Strife
- 3 Envy
- 4 Jealousy
- 5 Sin

Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Mark 11:24 KJV

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 KJV

### Takeaways

There are all kinds of enemies to prayer, but you need to know what hinders your prayer life so you can observe it, see it, recognize it, and not let it stop or stifle answers to your prayers.

When you pray, you get to forgive.

## Discovery Questions

- 1 How can the “enemies to prayer” hinder your prayers or prayer life?

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- 2 What does “when you pray, you get to forgive” mean to you?

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- 3 What can you do to recognize the enemies to prayer and not allow them to stop your prayers from being answered?

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## Diving Deeper

- Read the Focus Verse, Luke 11:1, every day this week as part of your daily devotions. Challenge yourself to have the verse memorized before your next Small Group meeting.
- Read scriptures from the Bible that focus on forgiveness.
- Journal how God is answering your prayers. Praise God by thanking Him for answered prayers!
- Invite a friend to your next Small Group meeting.

# PrayFirst

## Week 6

### CATCHING UP

Share one thing that you have learned from the "Pray First" study and are applying to your daily prayer life.

### Focus Verse

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Luke 11:1 KJV

### How to energize your prayer life:

- 1 Focusing on the nature of God.
- 2 Focusing on God's attributes.

### The Lord's Prayer Focuses on the nature and attributes of God.

- <sup>9</sup> After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- <sup>10</sup> Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
- <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.
- <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
- <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

### Takeaways

When you pray and you personalize it, it's more powerful.

Focus on the attributes of the Father and you'll want to be with the Father.

Prayer gives God permission to work in your life.

### Scriptures to pray daily.

- 1 Pray **Psalm 5** in the **morning**.
- 2 Pray **Psalm 4** in the **evening**.

## Discovery Questions

- 1 What are ways that focusing on the nature and attributes of God energizes your prayer life?

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- 2 Pastor shared that when you pray and personalize it, it's more powerful. How do you personalize your prayers to make them more powerful?

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- 3 Pastor shared that consistency builds and creates momentum. What is one way you are committed to being consistent in your prayer life?

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## Diving Deeper

- Study and memorize the Lord's Prayer.
- Journal how you are energizing your prayer life by focusing on the nature and attributes of God.
- Invite a friend to attend a Sunday service with you.

# Small Group Report Example

- Gregory Smith
- Lashonda Martin
- Melinda Peterson
- Joe Brinks
- Timothy Hernandez
- Wanda Wright
- Jose Martinez
- Mark Supak
- Matthew Hershel

## How did the small group go and do you have any questions?

-Joe messaged beforehand that he couldn't make it, but will be there next week!  
-Melinda brought her friend Andy. It was his first time and he loved it! Plans to come back next week.  
-Timothy started Growth Track last week!  
-We prayed for Matthew's grandmother who has surgery on Friday.  
-We shared with everyone about Eat Sweet Night!

Question: Our group shared in 2 weeks that majority can't make it on Tuesday, could we reschedule our group to Friday the 16th and have it at Red Robin?

SAVE

CANCEL



## Ideas to Help People Grow

- Invite them to sit with you in a Sunday Service.
- Share your personal story and what God has been teaching you.
- Share how Growth Track can help them grow and join a team.
- Invite them to check out the COTR Backstage podcast ([backstage.cotr.org](http://backstage.cotr.org)).
- Invite them to be water baptized (encourage your Small Group to be there).
- Share your spiritual habits; how you find time regularly to pray, worship, and read God's Word. Encourage them to make their own time with God.
- Invite them to come to special events at COTR.
- Tell them about our COTR Website, COTR App, and One Year Bible reading plan.
  - Watch past messages
  - Give
  - Stay connected
- If they are ready to receive Christ, offer to pray with them.
  - Ask God to forgive you of your sins (Romans 6:23, Romans 3:10, Titus 3:5-7)
  - Believe Jesus is God's Son and died for us (1 John 4:15, John 1:1,14, Romans 5:8)
  - Confess Jesus is Lord of your life (Matthew 10:32, Romans 10:9)

\* To eliminate confusion when managing your roster, we suggest to keep members pending until they show up to your group.



# Tips / Tools

- **When is childcare available?**  
We have childcare available on campus on Saturday afternoons at 2pm and Sunday mornings during our 11am service.
- **Where can I host my Small Group?**  
You can host online, at church, and off site. Some of the most common meeting places are homes, restaurants, parks, coffee shops, and office buildings.
- **What are things we avoid in Small Groups?**
  - Self-promotion
  - Take offerings
  - Unapproved materials or speakers
  - Controversial topics and politics
- **How to prepare for your group?**
  - Arrive early
  - Creating the right environment
  - Test and have video ready
  - Welcome everyone
  - Warm up the group with an ice breaker (Tell me about your week)
  - Discuss this week's questions
  - Ask for prayer requests
  - Pray
  - Encourage them to grow (look at ideas to help people grow)
- **What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?**  
It's okay to not have all the answers. Thankfully, we can find guidance through prayer, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to spend time reading the Bible and praying. Also, let them know that you will do your best to get some information and get back with them at your next Small Group meeting. Do some personal research and call your Coach to get advice.
- **Questions to ask yourself when your group attendance is inconsistent:**
  - Does the meeting day/time work for everybody?
  - Are you doing everything you can as a leader to help people engage outside the group?
  - Are you texting them?
  - Have you connected with them on a personal level? (Anniversary, birthdays, trips)
  - Have you asked members for feedback?
- **How do I get my group serving?**  
Encourage your group to get plugged into the Dream Team, by leading the way, talking about it, and inviting them to start by attending Growth Track.
- **What should I do if someone in my group shares something with me (or the group) that requires attention beyond what I (or we) can provide?**  
If you encounter a difficult situation within your Small Group, please know that you are not alone. If a member is going through a crisis, you can rally the group around them to provide prayer and encouragement. Use wisdom and be sensitive to the situation. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask your Coach. Also, you and/or the group member can call the church office to the Small Groups Department at 636-294-7841 if needed.
- **Need a tip we didn't cover?**  
Contact your Coach, they are there to serve you.

# Small Group Host Expectations

## General Expectations

- Complete Growth Track.
- Complete Background Check.
- Fill out Small Group online form (day, time, location).
- Attend and have your picture taken at the Small Group Training.
- Connect with your coach.  
**My coach's name:**  
**My coach's contact info:**
- Be open and honest with your group.
- Love your group well.
  - Pray for them
  - Lead them in discussion
  - Be full of grace
  - Invite members to attend every week
- Recruit members.
- Fill out your weekly report after each group meeting.
- Plan a party for the group's final meeting.
- Prioritize Sunday mornings (worship one, serve one).
- Contact those who sign up, introduce yourself, and share with them what to expect.
- Follow 70/30 Rule (70% of the group should talk / 30% of leadership should talk).
- Keep discussion positive (avoid politics, divisive issues, and negative talk).
- Respect boundaries (men minister to men and ladies minister to ladies).
- Serve at Small Group Rally on Sundays, Sept 4/Sept 11 by connecting with people and inviting them to sign up at [cotr.org/groups](http://cotr.org/groups) for a Small Group.
- Stay up to date and connected to the culture by listening to the COTR Backstage podcast ([backstage.cotr.org](http://backstage.cotr.org)).

## Zoom Expectations

- Make sure to have a computer or laptop (ipad or tablet will not work).
- Select a separate day with your coach or co-leader to test Zoom and Pastor's video.
- If you have trouble with your internet while playing the video from the website, use the special link to download the videos onto your computer.
- If not well versed in Zoom, attend our training on September 1st at 6:30pm.
- Arrive on Zoom 15 minutes before starting time.
- Make sure you have emailed and texted each person in your group the Zoom link.
- If your group is meeting over 40 minutes, we recommend you purchase a Zoom subscription (but not required).
- Make sure to keep your camera on where your group can see you the entire time.
- Lead your group in a room that has good lighting where your group can see you.
- Encourage them if possible to put their camera on so you can see each other.

## Onsite (at Church) Expectations

- Come early to prepare your room.
- Make sure lights are on in the room and everywhere your group will be (halls and areas near bathrooms).
- Leave the room as you found it (If you need to move chairs or tables, take a picture so you can put it back in the right spot).
- Take the trash out after your group finishes.
- Leave things better than you found them.
- Stay on time with your group (keep in mind that there could be a meeting right before or after your group).
- If something feels or looks wrong, please make a staff member aware immediately.
- Do not allow children to attend your group. Please utilize childcare (on Saturdays and Sundays).
- If an incident happens, please inform COTR staff member present and write up an incident report and also please contact your Small Group Coach immediately after your group.
- Avoid being alone with just one person at any time.

## Offsite Expectations

- Must have enough parking at the site for the people to attend.
- Make sure there's no object near the activity that can cause harm to anyone or cause any damage.
- Keep your pets contained and away from people to avoid bites and/or allergic reactions.
- The site must look like our church culture. House must be clean, no obscene pictures, or improper music.
- Avoid being alone with just one person at any time.
- Provide a private room for one person to change clothes (if needed for activity).
- Do not allow children to attend unless you have childcare staff member and approval from church leadership.
- If an incident happens, please write up an incident report and contact your Small Group Coach after your group.