**Fellowship CommUnity Group**

**Discussion Guide for Leaders**

*Series: Lord, Teach Us to Pray*

*Sermon: “Flawed Prayer” (9-16-18)*

***Group Leaders & Host Homes*** *: Thank You for your service to the Lord and to your group by faithfully opening your homes and through leading the groups in discussion. May God richly bless you as you continue to participate in this disciple making ministry.*

**Group Announcements (Leaders: Please review prior to start)**

**1)** Welcome everyone to your group.

**2)** Please remind all group members to commit to letting group leaders & host homes know in advance if they cannot attend group. Set this as a standard.

**3)** Review all instructions: Start time, childcare instructions, refreshments and parking.

**4) Leaders: Please note special instructions for prayer time.**

1. **Getting To Know Each Other** *Please use these questions as a time for people to informally talk and get to know each other. Since this is our first week, it may be good to let this time go longer than usual.*

1) Go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves. Welcome new group members.

2) Then go around again and ask each person to share what they enjoyed the most about this past summer – maybe a place they visited, some rest they had, visiting with family, anything.

* **Opening Prayer**. (Either leader, host home or someone who is willing to pray out loud)

*(Notes from message for reference only – use only as needed)*

**\*\***Use Sermon notes bulletin insert

* Prayer is a personal communicative response to the knowledge of God.
* **Warnings From Jesus About Prayer**
* 1**) When you pray do not pray like the hypocrites.**
* **2) When you pray, do not pray like the pagans**.
* > Jesus is telling us that not all prayer is good, not all prayer is helpful, some prayer is flawed, wrong and sinful!
* **Descriptions of Flawed Prayer**
* **1) Hypocritical Prayer – Self-righteous, people-directed, people-pleasing prayers**.
* **2) Pagan Prayer – Mindless, repetitive, verbose prayers**.
* **Jesus teaches us to pray this way:** Pray to your Father in solitude with God as your primary audience.
* **Why does Jesus teach us to pray this way?** Because your Father in heaven knows what you need before you even ask him.
* **Into The Text** (15 Minutes) (Leaders: This time is not meant to be application yet, this is time in the Word, before we seek to apply truth, we need to understand the meaning of the text. The section after this one will focus on application.)

1. Ask someone to read Matthew 6:1. *Why does Jesus mean by specifically mentioning the danger of doing righteousness ‘in order to be seen’?*
2. Ask someone to read Matthew 6:5-6*. Ask: What does that word hypocrite describe, specifically as Jesus used it? How did Jesus describe the way hypocrites like to pray? Why does Jesus say they have already received their reward? What kind of prayer does Jesus suggest in v6?*
3. Ask someone to read Matthew 6:7-8*. Ask: How did Jesus describe Gentile/pagan prayer in V7? What does Jesus mean by ‘empty phrases’ in V7? Why does Jesus say ‘they think they will be heard by their many words’? What specific problem in prayer is Jesus addressing in Vs7?*

**Application & Discussion** (15-20 Minutes)

1. Say: Let’s move to application. *Ask: Why are there so many different kinds of prayers and meditations in our world today? What are people seeking?*
2. *Ask: On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your own prayer life, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest? What do you need to do to improve your prayer life?*
3. Say: Pastor Marc shared this definition of prayer: A personal communicative response to the knowledge of God. *Ask: How do you typically define prayer? In what way is prayer a response to God?*
4. Say: Jesus described what hypocritical prayer looked like in his day*. Ask: What does hypocritical prayer look like in our day? Why does the Lord despise self-righteous, people-directed prayers? In prayer, who is our primary audience?*
5. Say: Jesus also described what mindless, repetitive prayer looked like in his day*. Ask: What does mindless, repetitive prayer look like in our day? How does Jesus want you to pray?*

**\*\*Prayer Time**: **(Leader Say:**)

* We will now close with a time of prayer. During this series we will be challenged to grow in our prayer lives and part of that will be in how we pray together as a group. We are not looking for long prayer, we are looking for meaningful, heartfelt prayer.
* For tonight, start with the discussion leader and have each person go around the room and pray one sentence out loud to the Lord, with all of your heart: “*Lord, please teach me to pray as you desire for me to pray*”. (encourage those uncomfortable with praying out loud to pray that simple sentence)
* Once everyone has prayed that simple sentence prayer, open it up for anyone else to pray, simple sentence prayers are fine, remember who our audience is, we are talking to our Father God, through his Son Jesus, in the Spirit’s power. He is not impressed with long eloquent prayers.
* The leader or someone else can close.