



# MIRACLES IN MOTION

## STUDY 1 - PRAYING WITH PURPOSE

You might want to start this study by asking your group about their individual experiences with prayer. You could ask, *"How would you describe the quality of your prayer life currently? In what ways would you like to improve your praying?"*

If asked the question, *"Does prayer feel like a chore?"* with a healthy dose of honesty, many would probably answer "yes". Could this be because we may not have an accurate picture of what the purpose of prayer is all about? Dallas Willard writes, "Constant prayer will only "burden" us as wings burden the bird in flight." That's not a burden! That's a purpose! Could it be that prayer feels like a burden because we have yet to understand that it is the God-given gift by which we soar?

The primary objective of prayer is not results, but it is relationship. Prayer is not a means by which we get God to do things for us. It's a means by which we know Him. Ruth Hayley Barton writes, *"The fundamental purpose of prayer is to deepen our intimacy with God."* Revelation 3:20 NIV carries this same sentiment. *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."* Prayer is the means by which we open the door of our lives to God, allow Him in, and share a meal with Him.

### DISCUSS

Have you ever thought about what the purpose of prayer is? How has your practice of prayer been shaped negatively or positively by your understanding of the purpose of prayer?

### DIGGING DEEPER

*It has been said that only the spiritually not-yet-mature know how to pray. The more you progress, the more you become aware of your status as a learner. Has this been your experience? Share amongst the group how your journey of prayer has developed as you've spiritually matured.*

There are many types of prayer. In our remaining studies we will explore some aspects of these in deeper ways. Prayer can look like praying scripture, intercession, confession, worship, prayer in silence, listening, communal prayer, prayer tongues... the list can go on. Ultimately the life of prayer that God is inviting us to is life as prayer. Our whole lives lived as prayer. We will discuss this more in a moment.

### DISCUSS

What type of prayer listed above comes most naturally to you? What might be the reasons for this? Are there any types of prayer that you would like to do more? Why?



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## DIGGING DEEPER

*Strahan Coleman writes that "Prayer is mostly the art of joining a conversation, not starting one."*  
In what ways do you see that prayer begins with God?

1 Thessalonians 5:17 encourages us to *"pray without ceasing"* (ESV). If prayer is just us talking to God, then praying without stopping sounds more than just daunting. It's impossible! But if we can live our lives in a posture of prayer, aware of God's presence in our every moment, speaking to Him and letting Him speak to us, then we begin to see a picture of what praying without ceasing is all about! "We learn that walking can be prayer, we may be silent but meditating or focused on God or His Word. Time in nature can be prayer as we ponder on God's creation. All can be prayer when we allow ourselves to become aware of God's presence within our present moment."

## DISCUSS

Share examples of times when you have spoken to God, or He has spoken to you, in a way that was a part of your everyday life. What could it look like for you to make prayer a more central part of your everyday life?

## DISCUSS

Think of a close relationship in your life such as a spouse or close friend. When you talk with them do you talk or listen more? Now consider your relationship with God. Is that balance of talking and listening the same or different? Why do you think that is the case?

Now it's time to pray. You may be asking, *"How long should prayers be? How often should I pray? Should it be in tongues or my native language? Should I talk? Should I listen? Does it need to be out loud, or can my prayers be silent?"* The answer is YES! Just start. If you don't know how to pray, or even if you have a pretty good grasp on prayer, open a Bible and read from Matthew 6:5-13.

After you have read this passage, why not take a few minutes together as a group to pray. You could start by praying verses 9-13 together out loud.

## DIGGING DEEPER

A great practice can be to pray these verses, that we know as "The Lord's Prayer", multiple times while over again placing an emphasis on, and meditating on, different words each time.