

Infusing Prayer in BFG & Community Groups

This training focuses on prayer and the role it plays in our BFGs. If we believe prayer is a first priority and not a last resort, we must treat it as such. The goal of this training is to brainstorm different ways of infusing prayer in our BFGs, as well as learning how to best administer the ministry of prayer.

Evaluating Prayer Ministry through Diagnostic Questions

Is our group actually praying for one another on a regular basis?	Is our group's prayer ministry helping members feel loved and supported?	Is our group's prayer ministry strengthening community and leading to practical ministry?	Is our group's prayer ministry leading members to confessions and repentance?
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The stronger the affirmation to these questions generally indicate a healthier BFG prayer ministry.

Jesus Prayer. Early Christians Prayer. We Should Pray.

The Bible is the guiding light by which Christians should live their lives. Examining Jesus and the early believers, we cannot deny the importance prayer played in their lives. Thus, the spiritual discipline of pray should play an important role in our lives, and it should spill over into Christian community. The scripture references on the next page remind us of our calling to be a people of prayer, and by extension, our BFGs should be marked by prayer as well.



Jesus expected His followers to pray:

- Mt. 6:5, “And when you pray...”
- Mt. 6:6, “But when you pray...”
- Mt. 6:7, “And when you pray...”
- Mt. 6:9, “This, then, is how you should pray...”
- Luke 11:9, “So I say to you: Ask...; seek...; knock”
- Luke 18:1, “Then Jesus told his disciples... they should always pray.”

Early Christians expected followers to pray:

- Acts 2:42, ““They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”
- Eph. 6:8, “Pray in the Spirit at all time and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.”
- Col. 4:2, “Devote yourselves to prayer.”
- 1 Thes. 5:17, “Pray continually.”
- 1 Tim. 2:1, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people.”
- James 5:16, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another.”

Structure for Prayer

The BFG Ministry's leadership structure is designed to ensure prayer is happening. BFGs have the option to implement their prayer ministry in one of two ways. Some BFGs appoint an individual prayer leader to oversee the prayer ministry, while other BFGs implement the community group model. The details of these leadership positions are spelled out in the BFG Leadership Training Guide. Section 4 of the guide contains information on all the different leadership positions, including the prayer leader. Section 5 provides an in-depth explanation of community groups.

The BFG gathering is also structured in a way that time is allocated during each gathering for prayer. BFGs are asked to set aside 5 minutes for group-wide prayer, regardless of leadership structure. 25 additional minutes is allocated for community groups. For BFGs not using the community group model, most, if not all, of these minutes should be set aside for prayer.

Brainstorming How to Infuse Prayer in BFGs

A little creativity can go a long way in creating a culture of prayer in our BFGs. Here is a list of common ways BFGs incorporate prayer in their groups:

- **Traditional group-wide prayer**
- **Community groups**
- **Gathering's opening/closing**
- **Distributed prayer lists**
- **Focused prayer times for individuals (e.g., life transition, health)**
- **Focused prayer times for particular ministries/events**
- **Missions-focused prayer (e.g., adopted missionary, persecuted church)**

When examining this list, prayer likely plays a bigger role in your BFG than initially thought. The reality is that this isn't an exhaustive list on how prayer can be infused in your group. Part of the responsibilities of prayer leaders is to consider how to best structure the prayer ministry in order to keep prayer before members. When making decisions on the shape of your BFG's prayer ministry, the diagnostic questions listed at the beginning of document should provide helpful guidance.

Best Practices Related to Prayer Ministry

We all desire for times of prayer in our BFGs to be as fruitful as possible. With this in mind, the following suggestions are designed to foster a healthy prayer ministry.

Protect times of prayer

Work with directors/teachers to ensure prayer time is prioritized, and other good things do not infringe on the time allocated.

Provide direction and parameters

Often giving direction and parameters for prayer times can be helpful, especially with larger groups. It may be appropriate to limit the number of prayers (e.g., one praise and one petition) and to hone in on specific types of prayer (e.g., prayers related to family and work only). In addition, there can be times when a particular individual dominates prayer time in a way that's unhealthy. In rare occasions, the prayer leader may need to gently address the issue privately with the individual.

Model guest sensitivity

In the busyness of leading times of prayer, it's easy to lack the sensitivity we would hope to show to guests. Go above and beyond to make guests feel welcomed and comfortable. Providing name tags for everyone may prove helpful.

Foster the habit of follow-up

It can be quite powerful when members show genuine concern for one another in following up with prayer requests. It communicates an unusual level of concern. The best way to foster the habit of follow-up is through leading by example.

Model the desired transparency

Group prayer will often remain surface until greater openness is demonstrated. Leaders should be prepared to reveal deeper prayer concerns, not only for their own spiritual good, but also as a way of inviting others into greater transparency.

Incorporate accountability

Accountability can be incredibly helpful to spiritual growth. Therefore, prayer leaders should look for opportunities to incorporate a level of accountability. An example of low-level accountability would include distributing prayer lists so members are expected to pray for one another. As the BFG grows closer, the hope is that accountability would increase over time.

Strive for confession and renewal

The hope within our BFGs is that members would regularly experience times of confession and renewal. However, this does not usually happen with intentionality. As we foster the habit of follow-up, model the desired transparency, and incorporate accountability, the desire is that genuine times of confession and renewal would occur. The ultimate goal of the prayer ministry is to see the people of God shaped into the image of God, but this cannot occur without spiritual growth.

Group size matters

As a general rule, the smaller the prayer group the more effective times of prayer will be. Therefore, prayer leaders should look for ways to create more intimate prayer groups within the BFG, whether its utilizing the community group model or another approach.