FBC SUMMIT

LIFE Group Discussion Guide

November 1, 2026

Matthew 6:5-8

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

OPENING

What makes it easier or harder for you to pray consistently?

Prayer is one of the most important practices in the Christian life, yet Jesus warns us that even prayer can become something we do for the wrong reasons. In Matthew 6:5–8, Jesus challenges us to examine not only whether we pray, but how and why we pray.

Today we will explore how genuine prayer is focused on relationship with God rather than impressing people or trying to manipulate God.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read **Matthew 6:5–8** together.

Ask the group to listen for:

- What does Jesus warn His disciples not to do when they pray?
- What was wrong with the prayers of the hypocrites?
- What does Jesus say about praying in secret?
- What does Jesus say about meaningless repetition?
- What does God already know before we pray?

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus continues His teaching in Matthew 6 about practicing righteousness for the right reasons. After addressing giving in verses 1–4, Jesus turns to prayer.
Jesus contrasts two wrong approaches to prayer.

First, some people prayed publicly in order to be seen and admired by others. Their problem wasn't that they prayed in public. The problem was that public recognition had become their motivation**.**

Second, Jesus warns against empty repetition. Prayer is not about saying enough words, repeating the right phrases, or trying to convince God to respond.

Instead, Jesus points His followers toward genuine relationship with the Father. We can pray privately, honestly, and confidently because God already knows what we need.

Prayer is not a performance for people or a formula for manipulating God. It is an honest relationship with our heavenly Father.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think Jesus specifically warns against praying "to be seen by people"?

Because prayer can become a performance. We can use spiritual language, public prayers, or even our knowledge of Scripture to make ourselves look more spiritual than we really are. Jesus wants prayer to come from a genuine desire to know and honor God.

What is the difference between praying publicly and praying to be seen?
Public prayer itself is not wrong. Jesus Himself prayed publicly. The difference is the motivation. We can pray publicly to lead others toward God, or we can pray publicly because we want others to admire us.

Why does Jesus tell His followers to pray in secret?
Private prayer removes much of the temptation to perform for others. When nobody else is watching, our focus can be on God rather than on how we appear to people.

What are some ways our prayer life can become more about appearances than relationship with God?
We might use impressive language, worry about how our prayers sound to others, pray mainly in public but rarely in private, or become more concerned about being viewed as spiritual than actually spending time with God.

What does Jesus mean when He warns against "empty phrases" or meaningless repetition?
Jesus is warning against treating prayer as though saying enough words or repeating certain phrases will force God to respond. Prayer isn't a magical formula. God desires genuine communication and dependence.

Does Jesus mean that we should never repeat a prayer or ask God for the same thing more than once?
No. Scripture contains repeated prayers and requests. Jesus is addressing meaningless repetition—the idea that many words or repeated phrases somehow make prayer more effective. Persistent prayer can be an expression of faith and dependence.

Why is it encouraging that "your Father knows the things you need before you ask Him"?
It reminds us that prayer isn't about informing God about something He doesn't know. He already understands our needs. Prayer gives us the opportunity to trust Him, depend on Him, worship Him, and bring our needs honestly before Him.

How does knowing that God already knows what we need affect the way we pray?
It can remove pressure to find perfect words. We can come honestly and confidently before God. We don't have to perform or persuade Him; we can simply talk with our Father and trust His wisdom.

APPLICATION

How would you describe your prayer life right now? What is one area where you would like to grow?

Are there times when you are more concerned about how your prayers sound to other people than about genuinely talking with God?

What is one practical change you could make this week to spend more intentional time alone with God in prayer?

DIG DEEPER

Read Psalm 139:1–4. How does this passage reinforce Jesus' statement that the Father already knows what we need?

Read Philippians 4:6–7. What does Paul say prayer accomplishes in the life of a believer?

Read Luke 11:1–4 What did Jesus teach His disciples when they asked Him to teach them to pray?

What does this passage teach us about the kind of relationship Jesus wants us to have with God?

Consider your own prayer life and ask yourself:

- Do I spend more time praying publicly or privately?
- Am I comfortable being completely honest with God?
- Do I approach prayer as a relationship or as a religious responsibility?
- Do I trust God even when He doesn't answer the way I expect?

How could our LIFE Group help one another develop deeper, more genuine prayer lives—not simply by praying more, but by growing in our relationship with God?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus reminds us that prayer isn't about putting on a spiritual performance. It isn't about impressing other people, finding the perfect words, or saying enough words to get God to act.

Prayer is about coming before our Father**.**

He already knows us. He already knows our needs. And He invites us to come to Him in faith, humility, honesty, and dependence.

This week, make time to pray privately - not because anyone else will see it, but because God will**.**

Remember, prayer isn't a performance for people. Prayer is about our relationship with the Father.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 6:16-18** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount.*

PRAYER FOCUS

- Develop deeper and more consistent private prayer lives.
- Seek God's presence rather than people's approval.
- Become more honest and dependent in our prayers.
- Trust God with the needs and concerns we bring before Him.
- Grow as a LIFE Group that prays for one another and depends on God together.
- Pray for our worship services—that hearts will be open, the Spirit will move powerfully, and people will respond in obedience to Christ.

COMMENTARY

Matthew 6:5-8

In this passage, Jesus teaches His disciples to approach prayer with sincere, private devotion to God rather than performing for the approval of others.

The Warning Against Hypocrisy (Verses 5–6)

- **The Hypocrites' Motive:** Jesus warns against praying like the hypocrites (literally "actors wearing a mask"). They stand in the synagogues and on busy street corners on purpose so people will see them and think they are deeply spiritual.

- **The Reward:** Their only reward is the temporary praise of human onlookers. They do not get a reward from God because their audience was people, not the Almighty.

- **The Secret Alternative:** Jesus instructs believers to go into a private room, close the door, and pray to their Father in secret. When the focus is purely on God without any desire to impress others, the heavenly Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The Warning Against Meaningless Babbling (Verses 7–8)

- **The Pagans' Mistake:** Jesus tells His followers not to "babble" or use empty, rote repetitions like the Gentiles or idolaters. They thought that if they used enough magic-like phrases or talked for a very long time, their gods would finally wear down and listen.

- **The Father's Knowledge:** Believers do not need to inform or manipulate God with long speeches. God is a loving Father who already knows what you need before you even ask Him. Prayer is meant to be heartfelt communication and relational trust, not a mechanical ritual.