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?

Most of us know that prayer is important, but Jesus wants us to think about more than just how often we pray. He wants us to think about why we pray and who we are really praying for.

Today we are going to explore how genuine prayer is about having a relationship with God, not impressing people or trying to get God to do what we want.

SCRIPTURE

Read **Matthew 6:5–8** together.

Ask the group to listen for:

- What does Jesus warn His followers not to do?
- Why does Jesus tell them to pray in secret?
- What does He say about using empty or meaningless words?
- What does God already know before we pray?

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus is teaching His followers about what genuine faith looks like. In the previous verses, He talked about giving. Now He turns to prayer.

Jesus warns about people who pray mainly so others will notice them. Their problem isn't that they pray publicly. Their problem is that being seen has become more important than actually connecting with God**.**

Jesus also warns against meaningless repetition. Prayer isn't about finding a magic phrase, saying enough words, or trying to convince God to give us what we want. Instead, Jesus points us toward our heavenly Father. God already knows what we need, and He wants us to come to Him honestly and trust Him.

Main Point:
Prayer isn't a performance for other people or a formula for getting what we want. It's a relationship with God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think Jesus warns people about praying "to be seen by people"?
Because prayer can become a performance. We might start caring more about how spiritual we look to others than about actually talking with God.

What's the difference between praying in front of people and praying so people will notice you?
There's nothing wrong with praying publicly. The problem is when attention, compliments, or approval become the reason we're praying.

Why do you think Jesus encourages His followers to pray in secret?
When nobody else is watching, we're less likely to worry about what people think. It gives us an opportunity to focus completely on God.

What does Jesus mean when He warns against "empty phrases" or meaningless repetition?
He's warning us not to treat prayer like a formula. Saying more words or repeating certain phrases doesn't make God more likely to answer us.

Does this mean it's wrong to pray for the same thing more than once?
No. The Bible encourages us to pray persistently. Jesus is warning against meaningless repetition, not sincere and persistent prayer.

Why is it encouraging that God knows what we need before we ask?
It means we don't have to impress God or find perfect words. He already knows us and cares about us. We can come to Him honestly and trust Him.

How could knowing that God already knows your needs change the way you pray?
We can be more honest with God instead of trying to sound impressive. We can tell Him what we're thinking and feeling while trusting Him with the outcome.

APPLICATION

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

Are there things—friends, phones, school, sports, busyness, or distractions—that make it difficult for you to focus on God when you pray?

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

DIG DEEPER

Read Psalm 139:1–4. What does this passage tell us about how well God already knows us?

Read Philippians 4:6–7. What does Paul say happens when we bring our concerns to God in prayer?

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

Discuss:
What does Jesus' teaching tell us about the kind of relationship He wants us to have with God?

Consider your own prayer life and ask yourself:

- Am I comfortable being completely honest with God?
- Do I treat prayer as a relationship or just something Christians are supposed to do?
- Do I trust God when He doesn't answer my prayers the way I hoped?

How can our LIFE Group encourage one another to develop deeper and more genuine prayer lives?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus reminds us that prayer isn't about putting on a spiritual performance.
We don't have to impress our friends, find perfect words, or say a certain number of things to get God's attention.

God already knows us. God already knows what we need. And He invites us to come to Him.

This week, spend some intentional time praying privately. Put away distractions, get alone with God, and simply talk with Him.

Remember, prayer isn't a performance for people; it's 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

Pray that we would:

- Become more dependent on God through prayer.
- Help one another develop a genuine relationship with God.
- Be a LIFE Group that regularly prays for one another.
- 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.