

# Friends for God Discussion Guide

## Week 2 B – Begin with Prayer



THE BIG IDEA

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### Big Idea

To reach, restore, and reproduce we begin by praying about who God wants us to bless each day and how He particularly wants us as individuals to bless our world.



### Ice Breaker

Take turns reciting a memorized prayer from childhood. Ex: Meal time and bedtime prayers.

B.L.E.S.S. represents a set of tools we can use to help us be on mission in our daily lives. B stands for “Begin With Prayer.” Beginning with prayer is not only a good idea, but it is modeled by Jesus many times in Scripture. Jesus is seen many times in story of his life on earth going off on his own to pray. He did this when he was tired, before a long tiring time of ministry and healing, before his crucifixion and before choosing his disciples – just to name a few.

1. Why do you think prayer was such a central part of Jesus’ life on earth, after all, he was already God?

Read the following Scripture and answer the questions that follow:

### Scripture - Luke 6:12-16

*“12 About that time Jesus went off to a mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night there. 13 The next morning he called his disciples together and chose twelve of them to be his apostles. 14 One was Simon, and Jesus named him Peter. Another was Andrew, Peter’s brother. There were also James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, 15 Matthew, Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus. The rest of the apostles were Simon, known as the Eager One, 16 Jude, who was the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed Jesus.”*

2. How do you imagine Jesus’ all-night prayer time was like?
3. Have you ever spent a significant time of prayer before making a big decision? What was that experience like?

Jesus’ life is full of fascinating decisions and actions. This particular story recounts when Jesus chose his team of closest friends. These men mentioned were to spend the next few years traveling with Jesus, learning and helping him in his ministry. Jesus’ decision was critical.

4. Have you ever been picked for a job or team that you knew you were under qualified for? How did it turn out? What did you learn?

Since we have the rest of the story recorded in scripture, we know that Jesus’ choices weren’t necessarily “dream team” material. Clearly Jesus’ time of prayer did not lead him to choose the brightest and most gifted people in town. In fact, even after their years with Jesus and after his death, the disciples were still known as ordinary men.

### Acts 4:13

# Friends for God Discussion Guide

## Week 2 B – Begin with Prayer



THE BIG IDEA

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13 *When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*

One of the important things Beginning with Prayer does is allows God to shape our minds and hearts to see the world through his perspective. Often times, just like with Jesus, God takes us in directions that don't make much sense to us or those around us.

Isaiah 55:8-9

8 *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.* 9 *“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

5. Share a time you realized God's ways and thoughts were not your ways or thoughts. How did that impact your life?

Begin with Prayer. For us to live lives on mission, we need to spend time hearing from God daily. It's a common thought that prayer is just about asking God for things, and yet the Bible says we should pray continually. Prayer, although at times it is asking God for things and even simply talking with God about things, is also and possibly most importantly a state of being. Prayer is a stance or a position. When we quiet our hearts before God we can go throughout our day in constant communication with him – truly praying continually.

6. What are some barriers that keep you from this kind of prayer?

Beginning with Prayer doesn't mean only taking a list of names and ideas to God and asking him to bless, guide and direct. Most importantly, beginning with prayer means bringing our hearts and minds to God and inviting him to reshape our understanding so that we can be transformed into his image.

Paul describes the effects of prayer this way:

“Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

### Next Steps

- Set 10-30 minutes aside each day this week to simply be quiet with God. Begin your time by praying something like this:  
“God, teach me to listen to you so that I can be used by you in my family, community and world. Reveal yourself to me so that by knowing you I may know those I come in contact with as you know them.”
- Practice communicating with God throughout your day. It might feel like you are talking to yourself at first, but push through the discomfort and purpose to share your thoughts and experiences with God as you would a friend or family member.

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### <sup>w</sup> Session 2 - Leader's Guide

1. There's lots of possible answers. There's no "wrong" answer. Possible answers will be:
  - a. Refuel and refocus
  - b. His humanity was a natural barrier from his Father – he needed that time to reconnect.
  - c. It was a good example for others to follow
2. Again, lots of possible answers with no wrong answers. Maybe he slept! Maybe he looked up at the stars and was just silent. Maybe he walked around the mountain. Maybe he vented all of his feelings and experiences verbally.
3. Many people pray about big decisions like jobs or marriages or health decisions. Encourage those stories to be told.
4. Again, another opportunity to share stories that reveal more about the group. Encourage stories even if they go off a bit. This is a great relational opportunity. Also, following Jesus means feeling unqualified!
5. This might be a good chance to encourage those who haven't shared to participate.
6. Often times we come to God with our requests. We look at him like a Divine Santa. It's hard to get past what we want or think we need to really just listen to God. Even when we do try to focus on listening, our thoughts fill our mind flooding our awareness of all the things we need to do! It's not easy!