

Session five

Prayer

Aim

By the end of this session group members should be able to:

- Understand the synergy between God's initiative, our prayers and our action.
- Identify a few friends to commit to praying for regularly.



Before the session...

Read: Story Bearer – Chapters 12-14

Recap

This is the fifth and final session. Take a moment to reflect on the course so far and allow group members to share any of the things that have changed for them so far as a result of these times together. If anyone has been practising sharing stories, invite them to have another go in front of the group if they want to.

Welcome

Give each group member two pieces of paper. Ask them to draw a large circle on each and explain that they have to draw two pie charts. The first pie chart is to estimate how they spend the main activities of their waking hours – divide the circle up into as many categories as they like – eating, working, childcare, church stuff – it does not need to be taken too seriously and is aimed to provide a light hearted opener to conversation. You might like to discuss which activities they would like to do more of and which to do less of.

Then repeat the activity just for their prayer life in terms of the types of prayer prayed, e.g. thanks, praise, sorry, asking for stuff, praying for the sick, praying for family etc. Ask people to consider the category of praying for friends to become Christians.

All prayer is important and it is easy to feel guilty for not praying enough, but in this session we are going to explore praying for our friends to come to faith.



Read...

The Bible – Colossians 4:2-6



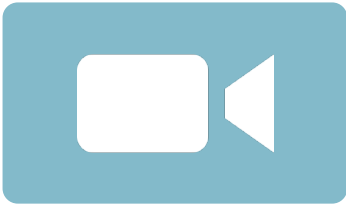
Watch...

Life Changers session 2 - <https://vimeo.com/394823392/a6d2c2873b>

Discuss

- What does prayer look like for you in your life? Do you have any rhythms of prayer that you have found useful in helping you pray?
- What does prayer look like specifically in terms of praying for friends to come to know Jesus? Do you have a list of people as Phil describes on page 121 of Story Bearer? Tell the group about the people on that list, or who would be if you had one.

- Colossians 4 tells us to pray that God would open a door for the message, what do you think that means for us today? What does it mean in your life?
- How would you describe the relationship between prayer and evangelism? Do you think we have the balance right as a church? How could we do better?



Watch...

Bear Grylls prays - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6FJ9rWhp7M>

Discuss

- Bear Grylls shows wonderful courage in offering to pray for President Obama. Have you ever offered to pray for someone who isn't a Christian? If so, how did it go?

Activity

Read the following extract from Story Bearer:

There was a great American preacher called Dwight L Moody. One day he began a list just like you. However, he was clearly 1) an optimist, 2) highly ambitious, 3) time rich and 4) very popular because his list did not contain five names but one hundred. Wonderfully, ninety-six of his one hundred friends decided to follow Jesus during his lifetime! Isn't that amazing?! What is even more amazing is that the final four were converted at his funeral! Imagine what would happen if we all had lists like Dwight L Moody and were as committed as he was to praying for them. Imagine if in our prayers at church we prayed for lost individuals in our communities as much as we pray for the sick or disasters from the news headlines. Imagine what it would be like if your friends knew Jesus for themselves and let that fuel your prayers for them.

Encourage the group to spend a moment in quiet reflecting on their friends and ask them to begin to write their list. This may be a well-trodden path and well prayed-for list, but this is a

moment to recap and add any new names to it. They may not get as far as Moody's 100 names but on paper, or on a note on a phone write the list afresh. You may like to play a worship song in the background.

Once the lists are written give each group member a piece of wool, string or thread. Explain that this is a tangible reminder of the list to help them to pray. Invite each group member to tie a knot in the wool for each name on their list and to take their time to pray as they do this. Encourage them to keep the strand somewhere visible, perhaps as a Bible bookmark or on a bedside table to remind them to pray for their friends.

Response

Using the strands of wool, encourage each person to talk about the friends represented by each knot. Some friends will be known to other group members, others will not. After they have talked about their friends pray for the group member who has shared, as a group, that they would be a good story bearer to those friends and faithful in prayer for them. Congratulate each other on finishing these five sessions and encourage one another to keep going in being great friends and bearers and sharers of stories.