

Praying with Scripture Guide

med·i·tate | medəˈtāt |

- to think deeply about something; to focus one's mind on something
- to affect the heart through the intense use of the mind
- to create space to listen to God through Scripture, so that when we respond in prayer, it's a dialogue

We encourage groups and individuals to spend time together immersing themselves in Scripture through meditation and prayer. God comes and speaks to us through his word, guiding us by his Spirit to expose our hearts' desires (both godly and flawed).

Christians throughout the centuries have come to the Scriptures in this way: imitating and responding to God's words to us, and allowing scripture to reorder, revise, and edit our hearts so that we respond to our experiences in light of the gospel.

Use the prompts below to guide your prayer.

First Reading (ex. Isaiah 55)

- *Meditate:* What words or phrases stand out to you? Think deeply about them. What do they really mean?

Second Reading (Psalm 42)

- *Meditate:* What is God saying through this passage?

Third Reading (John 13 v31-35)

- *Meditate:* Why is God showing me this today? If I took this seriously, how would I be different? How would we, His people, be different?

Fourth Reading (Psalm 103 v1-5)

- *Meditate:* The 3R's: Rejoice, Repent, Request
 - What can I rejoice in/adore God for because of this?
 - What do I need to repent of and confess?
 - What can I request and ask of our Father?

Group Prayer

- Let's pray conversationally* and talk to God about what we've heard.

Debrief (optional)

- Share: e.g. What did you hear from God? How was the prayer time?

Tips:

Staying Focused: Take a moment to be still. Remember that our God brings structure out of the chaos of our days. Invite the Holy Spirit who searches our hearts to guide you through this time of prayer.

Readings: Select four passages to be read. If praying in a group have more than one person be the reader.

Meditation Prompts: If in a group, the leader, can guide the meditation time by saying the prompt out loud after each reading, as well as keep time.

Silence: Give time after each reading to silently meditate on the text. This could be a 1 to 5 minutes depending on the length of the passage (enough time to read it two or more times and to respond if people are writing) *Don't rush it.* Give the Spirit time to help us observe and reveal both the affections of our hearts and the text. Be sure to leave enough time for group prayer.)

Chunking: If the passage is long, divide the readings into smaller chunks so that it's more easily digestible. After each set of verses is read, use the same meditation prompt and give the group time to reflect. For the remaining readings, the text can be read as a whole.

*Conversational Prayer

Just as meditation on Scripture helps us listen to God so that when we pray it's a dialogue, the style of conversational prayer helps us listen to one another so that when we pray together it's a conversation. It's easy! Just...

- Keep each prayer **short** and **focused** on just one thought.
- **Listen** to the person praying (instead of what you'll say next).
- Stay within topic. Connect to and **build upon** the prayers of one another, as in a conversation.
- Silence is okay! Rest in it. Don't rush to fill it.

Also...

- If a scripture comes to mind, do pray it.
- Use everyday language.
- Pray loud enough so others can hear you.
- No need to say "Jesus' name, amen" after each prayer. This fosters continuity and the leader will close the entire prayer time at the end.