

# Pray At Your Own Risk- WEEK 1

## CONNECT GROUP GUIDE

### GROUP GOAL FOR WEEK 1

The goal this week is **not** to teach people how to pray better.

The goal is to help people honestly name **what kind of God they believe they are praying to**, because that belief shapes everything else.

This group is about **posture before practice**.

### OPENING

#### Icebreaker Question

Choose one:

- When you hear the word prayer, what emotion do you feel first?  
Hope, guilt, confusion, comfort, skepticism, frustration?
- Growing up, what did prayer mostly feel like?  
A conversation, a duty, a last resort, or something else?

Leader note:

There are no wrong answers. Let people speak without correcting theology yet.

## **SET UP**

This week's message asked a risky question:  
Does prayer work?

What we learned is that science can study what prayer does to people, but it cannot study God Himself. Prayer is not a mechanism. It is a relationship. And before we talk about how to pray, we have to ask who we believe God is.

## **SECTION 1: DOES PRAYER WORK?**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What stood out to you most from the scientific research shared in the message?

Possible prompts:

- The Study results
  - Prayer reducing anxiety and stress
  - Prayer increasing meaning and resilience
2. Did anything challenge the way you normally think about prayer?

3. Why do you think we are so quick to ask “Does prayer work?” instead of “Who is God?”
4. How did you feel hearing that prayer is not medicine, but relationship?

## **SECTION 2: THE STORY OF HONI**

### **Reflection Question**

- What part of Honi’s story stood out to you the most and why?

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think the people turned to prayer instead of strategy when the drought came?
2. What do you think it says about their understanding of God that rain was seen as personal and theological, not just weather?
3. Honi’s prayer made religious leaders uncomfortable. Why do you think bold prayer can feel threatening or inappropriate to religious systems?
4. The leader said Honi prayed like a child talking to his father. How does that image reshape the way you think about prayer?

## **SECTION 3: WHAT KIND OF GOD DO YOU IMAGINE?**

### **Read Together**

Matthew 7:11 (ESV)

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him.”

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which description best reflects how you honestly imagine God when you pray?
  - A distant God you have to chase
  - An irritated God you have to manage
  - A disappointed God you have to impress
  - A Father who invites you to ask
2. How does your image of God affect:
  - How often you pray?
  - How honest you are in prayer?
  - What you are willing to ask for?
3. Why do you think bold prayer feels risky for many people?

4. The message said the greatest risk may not be asking too boldly, but stopping asking altogether. Where do you see that playing out in your own life?

## **SECTION 4: YOUR PRAYER CIRCLE**

### **Read Together**

James 5:16 (ESV)

“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What dream have you stopped praying for, if any?
2. What made you stop praying for it?  
Disappointment? Fear? Control? Fatigue?
3. What would it look like to step back into prayer, not demanding an outcome, but trusting God’s character?
4. What is one God-sized dream you sense God inviting you to bring back to Him this week?

## **CLOSING QUESTION FOR THE WEEK**

When I pray this week, what kind of God am I assuming is listening?