

Conversational Prayer

A Simple Way to Pray in Small Groups

As you **pray in community**, use the style of conversational prayer. It differs from what we often experience in group prayer: talking in detail about our prayer requests so that there is little time left to pray, or praying in one long monologue after another.

Conversational prayer recognizes that **prayer is dialogue**, conversing in prayer not only with God but also with others present. As we pray, we invite and expect the Holy Spirit to be praying with us as well, guiding and edifying our prayers among us.

This style of prayer also emphasizes the **art of listening** — to the Holy Spirit and to one another. Its use of short, focused prayers prevents anyone from dominating with long, lofty monologues or covering all the prayer requests in one breath. It is also more inviting to those who are shy or new to prayer and encourages them to pray out loud.

Tips for the leader:

- If appropriate, **present a topic** for the prayer time (e.g. about what God taught us in our study tonight; for our church; God's vision for our group this year).
- **Don't take time to share** prayer requests unless very briefly. Let them come out as the group prays.
- Begin the prayer time with **adoration**, praising God for who He is. Think of an attribute and characteristic of God that relates to the topic, so the group can build upon that.
- When a **topic is complete**, it will be clear by silence. Wait for someone else to present a new topic in prayer, or pose one yourself.
- **Close** the entire prayer time at the end.

It's easy! Just remember to:

- Keep each prayer **short** (1-3 sentences) and **focused** on just one thought.
- **Listen actively** to and pray silently with the person praying. Discipline yourselves to not think about what you'll pray next.
- **Build upon** the prayers of one another, as in conversation, so that you are knitting the short prayers into a broader and deeper one.
- **Silence** is okay! Rest in it. Don't rush to fill it. Anyone can continue praying within the **same topic**, or move onto the **next one**.
- Don't close each short prayer in "Jesus' name, amen." This fosters **continuity** and the leader will close the entire prayer time at the end.

Also:

- If a **scripture** comes to mind, do pray it. This is often how the Holy Spirit edifies our prayers. As you pray, also bring in His promises, commands, and desires. Doing so will help guide and transform your requests.
- Use **everyday language**.
- Pray **spontaneously**, not in a circle.
- Pray **loud enough** so others can hear you. Keep your heads up.

For example, a conversational prayer might sound something like this:

- *1st person*: "Lord, you are a sovereign God."
- *2nd person*: "Yes, you are in complete control and have authority over all things."
- *3rd person*: "God, you are in control of our lives. You know our past, present, and future. Please help us to rest and trust in you."
- *4th person*: "Would you help Jane to rest and trust in you as she struggles with ... help her to trust you with all her heart and lean not on her own understanding."