

Teach Us to Pray:

A 6-Week Small Group Experience

Welcome to *Teach Us to Pray*

Thank you for creating space for people to learn to pray.

One of the convictions behind *Teach Us to Pray* is that many Christians don't struggle with prayer because they don't love God or aren't spiritually committed. Sometimes they struggle because they've developed an image of what prayer is “supposed” to look like, and they don't fit it.

Over these six weeks, your group will discover that God created us differently, and that those differences influence how we naturally connect with Him. You'll also learn that our natural tendencies are starting places, not boundaries. God meets us where He created us and stretches us into new ways of experiencing Him.

Your job as a leader isn't to be a prayer expert. You don't need to have all the answers. Your role is to create a safe, grace-filled environment where people can explore, experiment, ask questions, and encounter God together.

My prayer is that by the end of these six weeks, the people in your group won't simply know more *about* prayer. They'll have discovered new ways of living in relationship with the God who knows them, loves them, and desires to meet them right where they are.

About This Small Group Experience

Length: 6 weeks

Session length: Approximately 60 minutes

Recommended group size: 6–12 people, although it can work with larger groups.

Participant resource: *Teach Us to Pray: Discovering How You Were Created to Connect with God*

Leader resource: This guide

Additional resources: Books, Leader Guide. Printed assessments, signs, and worksheets (found at the end of this guide), Pens, Index cards, Bibles, Paper/journals, Markers or colored pencils, Phone/speaker for music, Ordinary objects for the Week 5 Prayer Lab

Core promise:

Discover how God created you to connect with Him and learn to pray beyond your natural tendencies.

Week	Theme	Big Question	Experience
1	You're Not Bad at Prayer	What have I believed prayer is supposed to look like?	Prayer Tendencies Assessment
2	How God Created You to Pray	How do personality and processing shape prayer?	Identify & explore your tendency
3	Praying From Your Strengths	What kinds of prayer naturally give me life?	Practice prayers that fit your tendency
4	Praying Beyond Your Comfort Zone	Where might God be stretching me?	Practice a contrasting prayer style
5	Prayer in Real Life	How can prayer become part of ordinary life?	Experiment with everyday prayer practices
6	Building Your Prayer Rhythm	What sustainable prayer life fits my actual life?	Create a personal prayer rhythm

What This Study Is and Isn't

This is a framework, not a formula.

The Natural Prayer Tendencies are designed to increase self-awareness, not put people into boxes. Participants may strongly identify with one tendency, see themselves in two, or discover that their preferences change depending on circumstances or seasons of life.

The point is not to convince someone that an assessment result defines them. Let the framework create interest and conversation. We want people to explore prayer and begin to see that prayer looks different for different kinds of people.

Throughout the study, keep returning to this principle: Your natural prayer tendency is a starting place, not a boundary.

Create a Safe Environment for Prayer

Confidentiality: What's shared in the group stays in the group.

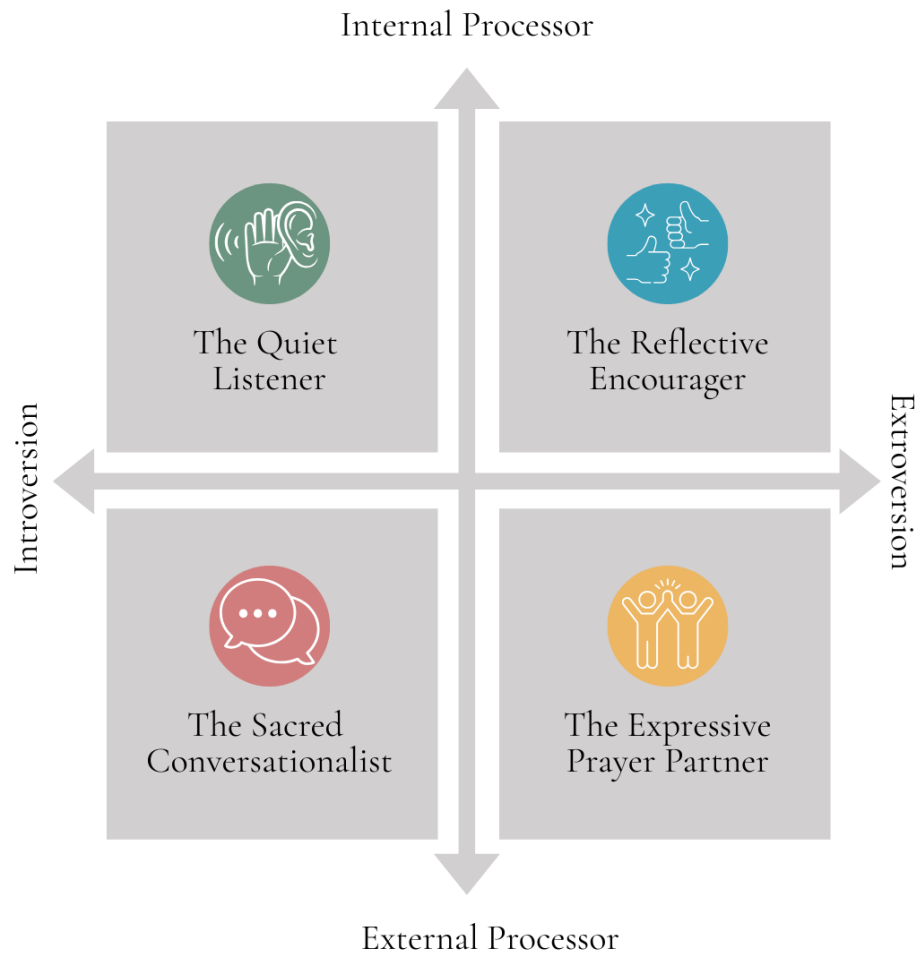
Permission to pass: Anyone may choose not to share or participate in a particular exercise.

No comparison: We don't evaluate another person's prayer life.

No fixing: Listen before offering advice.

No prayer performance: Eloquence, length, volume, emotion, or silence are not measures of spiritual maturity.

The Four Natural Prayer Tendencies at a Glance



Quiet Listener: Regularly encounters God through stillness, reflection, listening, and inward attentiveness.

Reflective Encourager: Regularly encounters God through thoughtful reflection, relationships, intercession, and encouragement.

Sacred Conversationalist: Regularly encounters God through honest conversation and discovers what's happening internally by talking it through.

Expressive Prayer Partner: Regularly encounters God through expression, participation, worship, movement, and shared prayer.

Remember: These aren't measures of spiritual maturity. No tendency is better, deeper, or more spiritual than another.

The Leader's Role

- **Create safety.**
Never force anyone to pray aloud, disclose something personal, or participate in a practice that makes them feel unsafe.
- **Model curiosity.**
Use language like “*What did you notice?*” rather than “*Did that work?*”
- **Resist fixing.**
People don't need the leader to explain or defend every spiritual experience.
- **Honor differences.**
Don't allow joking about one tendency to turn into stereotyping or criticism.
- **Participate.**
The leader isn't the prayer expert. Take the assessment, try the practices, stretch yourself, and learn alongside everyone else.
- **Lead as a fellow learner, not a prayer expert.**

How Each Session Works

- **CONNECT:** Check in and reflect on the previous week's experience.
- **DISCOVER:** Explore Scripture and the week's central idea.
- **DISCUSS:** Learn from one another through conversation.
- **EXPERIENCE:** Practice prayer rather than merely talking about it.
- **LIVE IT:** Carry one simple practice into the coming week.

Don't sacrifice experience because discussion ran long.

Preparing Each Week

Before your group meets:

- Read the week's leader guide.
- Read the assigned pages from *Teach Us to Pray*.
- Read the Scriptures prayerfully.
- Gather any materials listed for the week's experience.
- Prepare the room for that week's activities.
- Pray for the people in your group by name.
- Participate in the week's practice yourself before leading it.

A Word About Silence

Some of the experiences in this guide include silence. As a leader, thirty seconds of silence may feel like three minutes. Resist the urge to fill it.

Silence isn't space that you need to manage. Permit people to settle into it.

At the same time, remember that silence may be much more difficult for some Natural Prayer Tendencies than others. That's okay. Discomfort isn't failure.

One Final Word to the Leader

You are not responsible for creating an encounter with God.

Create the space. Extend the invitation. Guide the conversation. Lead the experience. Then trust God with what happens.

Some people will experience God in silence. Others will encounter Him through conversation, Scripture, movement, worship, reflection, or another person. Some may experience something profound. Others may become a little more aware.

All of that is okay.

Keep bringing the group back to the prayer that started this entire journey: **“Lord, teach us to pray.”**

Week 1 - You're Not Bad at Prayer

Big Idea: Prayer is relationship, not performance.

Key Question: What have I believed prayer is supposed to look like?

Reading Before Session: None. At the end of the session, participants will be asked to read **pages 3-26 before Week 2**

1. CONNECT: Welcome & Opening Conversation, 10 minutes

We'll spend six weeks learning about prayer, but this isn't a class where I'll teach you the correct way to pray. We'll begin by questioning some of the assumptions we've picked up about what prayer is supposed to look like.

Icebreaker:

Finish this sentence, "Growing up, I thought a really spiritual person prayed _____."

Then ask, "Where do you think those ideas came from?"

2. DISCOVER: "Lord, Teach Us to Pray," 15 minutes

Read Luke 11:1-4 together.

The disciples asked to be taught. These weren't people unfamiliar with Jesus. They had walked with Him and heard Him teach. Watched miracles. Seen Him pray. And still said, "Lord, teach us to pray."

If the disciples needed to ask Jesus to teach them, we shouldn't be ashamed to ask for the same.

Core Teaching Points:

Truth #1: Prayer can be learned.

Not knowing how to pray doesn't mean you're spiritually immature. The disciples learned. We're learning. And we'll continue learning.

Truth #2: Jesus made prayer remarkably accessible.

Look at Jesus' answer. He doesn't give them a complicated technique. He gives them a simple prayer.

It was simple, honest, relational, and accessible. Contrast that with their assumptions of prayer. We may assume good prayer must be long, eloquent, emotional, perfectly focused,

deeply theological, spontaneous, or impressive. But Jesus doesn't seem particularly concerned with impressing anybody.

Truth #3: Prayer is relationship, not performance.

Now read Matthew 6:5-8.

Jesus specifically warns against praying “to be seen by others” and against thinking many words somehow make prayer more effective.

Prayer isn't something we perform for God. Prayer is how we live in relationship with God.

3. DISCUSS: What Has Formed My Prayer Life? 15 minutes

Four questions are suggested below, but don't feel pressure to get through all four.

Question 1: When has prayer felt most natural or life-giving to you?

Question 2: When has prayer felt difficult, intimidating, boring, or frustrating? Why?

Question 3: Have you ever compared the way you pray with someone else? What did that comparison make you believe about yourself?

Question 4: What might change if you really believed God was more concerned with connecting with you than evaluating how well you pray?

4. EXPERIENCE: “I Don't Know How to Pray”, 10 minutes

Read Romans 8:26–27

Lead them through the following prayer experience, reminding them we are going to give up “praying correctly.” As we try new prayer experiences, it will feel messy and uncomfortable at first. Just because it's unfamiliar doesn't mean it's ineffective.

Use your phone to time it. Let them know we will spend just three minutes in prayer today. Review the prayer format so they know what to expect. This may be the first time someone in the group has prayed for 3 minutes!

Minute 1: Be Present

Pray: “God, I am here.”

Silence. Imagine you with God and God with you.

Minute 2: Be Honest

Ask everyone to complete this sentence silently: “God, what I really want You to know today is...”

Silence. Take this minute to tell God what you want God to know.

Minute 3: Receive

Pray, “God, what do You want me to know today?”

Silence. Listen. Let God speak to your mind. Let God speak to your heart.

Then close with, “Lord, teach us to pray. Amen.”

Debrief the experience: “What did you notice?”

5. LIVE IT: The Invitation for This Week, 5 minutes

Here is one simple practice for this week:

The Honest Prayer

Once each day this week, pause and complete this sentence, “God, here's where I really am today...”

Then tell Him. Thirty seconds. Five minutes. Ten minutes. It doesn't matter. No minimum time. No required posture. No perfect words. Just honesty. Then close your prayer time with, “Lord, teach me to pray.”

6. PREPARE: Set Up Week 2, 5 minutes

“Over the next five weeks we're going to explore an idea: what if some of the things you've assumed were weaknesses in your prayer life are actually connected to how you're wired?”

Then give them the reading assignment: before week 2, read pages 3–26 of *Teach Us to Pray*.

Ask them to underline anything that makes them think, “That's me!” or, “I've never thought about prayer that way.”

Don't read past page 26, though! That is important!

Week 2 - How God Created You to Pray

Big Idea: God created us differently, and those differences influence how we naturally experience prayer.

Key Question: How might the way God created me shape the way I connect with Him?

Reading Before Session: Pages 3-26

Ask participants to come having marked anything that made them think: “That’s me!” or “I’ve never thought about prayer that way.”

Importantly, they have not yet read the four individual tendency descriptions, which begin on page 30.

1. CONNECT: What Did You Notice? 8 minutes

Ask, “How did the Honest Prayer go this week?”

Don’t ask whether they did it every day. That matters because Week 1 focused on dismantling performance.

Instead ask, “Did you try it at least once? What did you notice?”

“What was one sentence or idea from this week’s reading that made you think, ‘That’s me!’ or ‘I’ve never thought about prayer that way before?’”

Let several people share.

“Last week we talked about letting go of the idea that there is one correct way to pray. Today we’re going to begin discovering why some forms of prayer may feel much more natural to you than others.”

2. DISCOVER: God Created Us Differently, 10 minutes

Read Psalm 139:13–14.

“What words stand out to you from this passage?”

What might that have to do with the way we pray?

Let’s make an important distinction here. We’re not saying, ‘God gave you one prayer personality, so that’s the only way you should pray.’

We’re saying, ‘The person God created you to be comes with you when you pray.’ Your temperament doesn’t disappear when you close your eyes. Your ways of processing emotion

don't disappear. Your need for solitude or interaction doesn't disappear. Your ways of thinking, speaking, and relating don't disappear. So, it makes sense that these things would influence how we experience our relationship with God.

God created people with different personalities, rhythms, strengths, emotional patterns, ways of thinking, and ways of relating, and therefore it makes sense that we would also experience prayer differently.”

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–6.

“Difference does not mean deficiency. Different does not mean less spiritual.”

3. DISCOVER: Two Things That Form How We Pray, 12 minutes

Draw two lines on a board or chart paper.

Line #1 = ENERGY

INTROVERT ————— EXTROVERT

Explain that this isn't Shy $\longleftrightarrow$ Outgoing. It's primarily about energy and stimulation.

An introvert generally restores energy in lower-stimulation environments, through solitude, or in smaller relational settings.

An extrovert generally gains energy through engagement, interaction, activity, and connection.

Ask for a show of hands: “Who knows they lean introverted?” “Extroverted?”
“Anybody somewhere in the middle?”

Line#2 = PROCESSING

INTERNAL ————— EXTERNAL

This distinction may be newer to people.

Internal processors:
Think $\rightarrow$ process $\rightarrow$ speak

External processors:
Speak $\rightarrow$ process $\rightarrow$ discover

Internal processors need time to think deeply and consider things as clarity and understanding take shape internally. They frequently think about something before spending time in prayer with God.

External processors are people for whom verbal expression is part of how clarity itself forms; they may literally “pray their way into clarity.”

Example: “An internal processor gets asked, ‘How are you feeling about that?’ and says, ‘I’m not sure. Let me reflect on it.’

An external processor may give you a 15-minute answer and somewhere around minute 12 say, ‘Oh! That’s how I feel!’”

One person may need to sit with something before they know what they want to say to God. Another may need to talk to God to discover what they’re feeling. Neither is doing prayer incorrectly.

4. EXPERIENCE: Take the Natural Prayer Tendency Assessment, 10 minutes

Distribute the assessment. Ask everyone to take it individually and quietly.

Remind them, “Answer according to who you really are, not who you think a spiritual person should be.”

The assessment gives them two results:

Energy: Introvert or Extrovert

Processing: Internal or External

Then have them combine them:

	Internal Processor	External Processor
Introvert	Quiet Listener	Sacred Conversationalist
Extrovert	Reflective Encourager	Expressive Prayer Partner

Ask them to share their results.

5. EXPLORE: Meet Your Tendency, 10 minutes

Put four signs around the room:

QUIET LISTENER: Introvert + Internal

SACRED CONVERSATIONALIST: Introvert + External

REFLECTIVE ENCOURAGER: Extrovert + Internal

EXPRESSIVE PRAYER PARTNER: Extrovert + External

“Go stand near the tendency your assessment identified.”

Give each group a Tendency Summary Handout for their type. Ask one person in the group to read it aloud. Then give each group about four minutes to discuss:

- What about this result sounds like you?
- What surprised you?
- What kinds of prayer have historically felt most natural to you?

Then ask each group to share a few observations from their tendency with the whole room.

6. TEACH: Your Tendency Is a Starting Place, 5 minutes

Bring everyone back together. Now give them what may be the most important theological guardrail in the whole curriculum: Your natural tendency is a starting place, not a boundary.

We aren't saying: “I'm a Quiet Listener, so I don't pray aloud.” or “I'm an Expressive Prayer Partner, therefore silence isn't for me.”

Quite the opposite. No natural tendency is ‘more spiritual’ than another. Then cast a vision of growth:

A Quiet Listener learns courage.
An Expressive Prayer Partner learns silence.
A Sacred Conversationalist learns vulnerability.
A Reflective Encourager learns spontaneity.

God meets us through the ways He created us, but He also stretches us beyond what comes naturally. That's spiritual formation.

7. EXPERIENCE: Four Ways to Pray, 3–5 minutes

“I'm going to give you four possible ways to spend the next three minutes with God. Choose whichever sounds most natural to you.”

Option 1: Be Still: Sit silently and notice God's presence.

Option 2: Write: Write a short prayer beginning, “God, what I'm noticing today is...”

Option 3: Talk: Quietly talk to God about whatever is on your mind.

Option 4: Pray With Someone: Find another person and briefly pray for one another.

Don't tell them which tendency corresponds to which practice. Just let them choose.

Afterward, ask, “Why did you choose the one you chose?”

LIVE IT: This Week's Practice

This week's assignment: **Notice Your Prayer**

Don't change anything about your prayer life yet. Just notice and pay attention to:

When did prayer feel natural?

Where were you?

Were you alone or with people?

Were you silent or speaking?

Were you still or moving?

Were you thinking before praying, or did you discover what you thought while praying?

What helped you become aware of God?

Jot down a few observations.

We're building self-awareness before beginning behavior change.

Reading Before Week 3: pages 27-55

That covers all four Natural Prayer Tendencies:

- The Quiet Listener, p. 32
- The Sacred Conversationalist, p. 37
- The Reflective Encourager, p. 43
- The Expressive Prayer Partner, p. 49

Have everyone read all four, not just their own. This book isn't simply "Understand yourself." It's also, "Understand people who connect with God differently than you."

Ask them to mark three things while they read:

★ Put a star beside something that describes you.

+ Put a plus beside something you see as a spiritual strength.

→ Put an arrow beside something that might represent an invitation for growth.

Week 3 - Praying From Your Strengths

Big Idea: The way you naturally connect with God can become a place of spiritual strength.

Key Question: What happens when I stop trying to pray like someone else and begin praying from the strengths God has already given me?

Reading Before Session: *Teach Us to Pray*, pages 27-55

Participants should have read all four tendencies:

- The Quiet Listener, p. 32
- The Sacred Conversationalist, p. 37
- The Reflective Encourager, p. 43
- The Expressive Prayer Partner, p. 49

Last week we asked them to mark:

- ★ Something that describes me
- + A spiritual strength
- An invitation for growth

We'll use those markings during the session.

1. CONNECT: What Did You Notice? 8 minutes

Last week's practice was **Notice Your Prayer**.

“What did you notice about yourself this week?”

When did prayer feel most natural?

Were you alone or with someone?

Were you quiet or expressive?

Were you still or moving?

Did you think before praying, or did you discover what you were thinking while praying?

“Did anything you noticed support or challenge your assessment result?”

The assessment isn't infallible; it's a tool for awareness.

2. DISCOVER: Different Doesn't Mean Deficient, 10 minutes

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–7.

“Paul gives us a larger principle about Christian community: the same Spirit works through different people in different ways.”

Write this somewhere everyone can see: DIFFERENT ≠ DEFICIENT

We tend to compare our weaknesses to someone else's strengths.

The Quiet Listener hears someone pray spontaneously for ten minutes and thinks, “I wish I could pray like that.”

Meanwhile, the Expressive Prayer Partner hears someone describe sitting silently with God for thirty minutes and thinks, “I wish I could do that!”

The Reflective Encourager may admire someone's ability to receive.

The Sacred Conversationalist may admire someone's ability to organize their thoughts before speaking.

And everybody assumes someone else is better at prayer!

But what if we stopped asking, “Why can't I pray like them?” and started asking, “What has God already given me that can become a strength in prayer?”

3. EXPLORE: Name Your Strengths, 10 minutes

Have participants return to the tendency they identified last week. If possible, have the four groups gather again in different corners of the room. Ask them to look at what they marked with + while reading.

Then give them this assignment:

As a group, summarize the spiritual strengths that seem to characterize your tendency. You can use your book and your personal experience.

Examples:

Quiet Listener: Depth and attentiveness.

Sacred Conversationalist: Genuineness and relational honesty.

Reflective Encourager: Thoughtful compassion.

Expressive Prayer Partner: Spiritual energy and openness.

After a few minutes, ask each group, “What's one strength your tendency brings to the larger Body of Christ?”

This changes the conversation. We're no longer just talking about how I like to pray. We're talking about: What do I contribute to us?

4. EXPERIENCE: Pray From Your Strength, 15 minutes

“Next week we're going to stretch ourselves. But not today! Today I want you to experience what happens when you intentionally pray from your strengths.”

Give each group its own prayer experience.

Quiet Listener: Listening Prayer

Read Psalm 46:10.

Then spend five minutes in silence.

Begin a time of prayer with, “God, I am listening.”

No agenda. No need to hear anything dramatic. Notice.

Afterward, write one sentence: “God, what I'm noticing is...”

Sacred Conversationalist: Honest Conversation

Read Psalm 142:1–2.

Take a short walk alone or find a private place.

Begin your prayer time with, “God, here's what's really going on with me...”

And talk to God. No polished words. No prayer voice. No editing. Just conversation. The purpose isn't to give God information. It's to become honest in His presence.

Reflective Encourager: Intercessory Prayer

Read Philippians 1:3–4.

Then ask God to bring one person to mind.

Write their name down.

Spend several minutes prayerfully considering: What might this person need from God right now?

Then pray:

God, give them _____.

God, help them _____.

God, remind them _____.

Finish by asking God, “Is there some way I could encourage this person today?”

Expressive Prayer Partner: Worship & Spoken Prayer

Give the Expressive Prayer Partners worship music for their corner of the room.

Read a portion of Psalm 150.

Pray in whatever outward way feels natural: sing, speak, stand, walk, raise their hands, pray aloud, or pray with another person.

Toward the end of the time, gather as a group and spend a couple of minutes praying aloud together.

5. REFLECT: What Was That Like? 7 minutes

Bring everyone back.

Ask, “What did you notice?”

Did the practice feel natural? Why?

Did you find it easier to become attentive to God?

What strength from your tendency showed up during the experience?

What did you notice about the other groups?

“God was present in all four corners of this room.”

6. LIVE IT: Lean Into Your Strength, 5 minutes

This week's assignment is different from last week's observation.

Last week the focus was on noticing. This week the focus is on practicing.

Choose one prayer practice from the back of the book that naturally fits your tendency and intentionally practice it three times this week. One practice, three times.

For example:

Quiet Listener:

10 minutes of silence, Lectio Divina, journaling, nature prayer.

Sacred Conversationalist:

Prayer walks, conversational prayer, talking with God while driving, prayer with a trusted friend.

Reflective Encourager:

Intercession, written blessing, prayer for another person, reflective Scripture prayer.

Expressive Prayer Partner:

Worship prayer, spoken prayer, prayer walk, group prayer, praying Scripture aloud.

Then record one sentence after each experience, “I noticed...”

Reading Before Week 4

Read pages 56-73, Part 2: Designing a Prayer Rhythm Which Fits Your Life

Pay particular attention to anything that makes you uncomfortable; not what sounds wonderful or what you're excited to try.

When you think, “Oh, I wouldn't want to do THAT,” put an **X** beside it in the book. Because next week we're going there.

Week 4 - Praying Beyond Your Comfort Zone

Big Idea: Your natural prayer tendency is a starting place, not a boundary.

Key Question: Where might God be inviting me to encounter Him beyond what feels natural or comfortable?

Reading Before Session: *Teach Us to Pray*, pages 56-73, Part 2: Designing a Prayer Rhythm That Fits Your Life

Participants were asked last week to put an X beside practices or ideas that made them think:

“That doesn't sound like me.”

“That would be uncomfortable.”

“I wouldn't choose that.”

1. CONNECT: What Happened When You Prayed From Your Strengths? 8 minutes

Last week's invitation was to intentionally practice a prayer form that fit their tendency three times.

“What did you notice?”

What did you practice?

What felt natural about it?

Did you notice anything about God or yourself that you hadn't noticed before?

Did anyone discover that something we assumed would fit your tendency didn't?

The framework shouldn't become prescriptive. If a Quiet Listener hates journaling, they don't need to learn to love journaling because a chart says they should. Their experience matters.

“Last week we permitted ourselves to pray from our strengths. This week we're going to do almost the opposite.”

2. DISCOVER: Comfort Isn't the Goal, 10 minutes

Read Luke 22:39–46.

Notice the movements in Jesus' prayer:

Jesus withdraws. There is solitude.

Jesus speaks honestly. “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me...” There is expression.

Jesus surrenders. “Yet not my will, but yours be done.” There is submission.

Jesus continues. This isn't a comfortable spiritual experience. And yet it's profoundly intimate.

Then introduce the week's central distinction:

LIFE-GIVING ≠ ALWAYS COMFORTABLE

Sometimes a prayer practice feels life-giving because it fits how we're wired. That's good. But sometimes God meets us in practices that initially feel awkward, unfamiliar, or difficult. Some practices may feel immediately natural while others may feel awkward at first. Both can become holy ground.

3. EXPLORE: When Strength Becomes a Blind Spot, 10 minutes

Every strength has a shadow side. It's not necessarily a sin but can be a likely blind spot.

Write the four tendencies on a board or chart paper and talk through the blind spots associated with each, as well as the invitation for growth.

Quiet Listener

Strength: Depth and attentiveness.

Possible blind spot:

Isolation, overthinking, hesitation, waiting for perfect words, difficulty revealing vulnerability.

Quiet Listeners can struggle with hesitation during communal prayer, overthinking, expressing emotions verbally, and isolation.

Growth invitation: *Let someone in.*

Sacred Conversationalist

Strength: Genuineness and relational honesty.

Possible blind spot:

Prayer can become dominated by one's own processing. Talking may come more naturally than listening, and trusted relationships can potentially substitute for solitude with God.

Growth invitation: *Pause and listen.*

Reflective Encourager

Strength: Thoughtful compassion.

Possible blind spot:

Always carrying others. Always helping. Always praying *for* someone else while neglecting one's own needs.

The Reflective Encourager may need to learn to receive prayer rather than only carry others.

Growth invitation: *Allow yourself to receive.*

Expressive Prayer Partner

Strength: Spiritual energy and openness.

Possible blind spot:

Rushing, emotional reactivity, difficulty slowing down, speaking more than listening, or equating emotional intensity with inner depth.

Growth invitation: *Become still.*

Ask, “Which of these growth invitations makes you squirm a little?”

That's probably where you need to pay attention.

4. DISCUSS: What's My Growth Edge? 10 minutes

Divide them into groups of two or three rather than their tendency groups this week. Give each group a mix of the tendencies. Have them discuss the following questions.

1. What did you put an X beside in this week's reading? Why?

2. Is there a prayer practice you have tended to judge because it doesn't connect with you? This could create an important conversation. That's where personality preference can accidentally become spiritual judgment.

3. Where might God be inviting you to grow?

5. EXPERIENCE: Cross the Quadrant, 12 minutes

I'm going to have everyone intentionally practice something that goes against their natural tendency.

Instead of going to the corner that matches where they belong, they'll go to the opposite corner.

The swaps are:

Quiet Listener ↔ Expressive Prayer Partner
Sacred Conversationalist ↔ Reflective Encourager

Quiet Listener moving to Expressive Prayer Partner's corner

Spoken Communal Prayer

In groups of 2–3, read Psalm 100:1–2 aloud and then take turns praying short prayers of praise and gratitude aloud.

Growth invitation: *Move what's happening inside you outward and allow others to participate in your prayer.*

Expressive Prayer Partner moving to Quiet Listener's corner

Silence and Listening Prayer

Read Psalm 46:10, then spend five minutes alone and completely silent.

Begin your prayer internally with, “God, I am here. I'm listening.”

No music, talking, or group interaction.

Growth invitation: *Allow God to meet you without needing outward expression or stimulation.*

Sacred Conversationalist moving to Reflective Encourager's corner

Thoughtful Intercessory Prayer

Choose someone from the group and write their name on an index card. Spend several minutes quietly reflecting:

- What do I know about this person's life?
- What might God desire for them?
- What Scripture or word of encouragement comes to mind?
- What do I want to ask God to do in their life?

Then write a short prayer for that person on the card and give it to them.

Growth invitation: *Move beyond processing your own heart conversationally with God and quietly carry someone else's heart before Him.*

Reflective Encourager moving to Sacred Conversationalist's corner

Receiving Vulnerability

Find a partner. In pairs, share, "Here's what's really going on with me right now..."

Don't talk about someone you're worried about.

Don't talk about someone you're helping.

Don't turn it into ministry.

Talk about you.

Then allow the other person to listen and pray for you.

Switch and repeat with the other person.

Growth invitation: *Move from internally carrying others to externally processing your own heart with someone you trust.*

Quiet Listener: *"Can I move from quiet/private/internal → shared/expressive/external?"*

Expressive Prayer Partner: *"Can I move from shared/expressive/external → quiet/private/internal?"*

Sacred Conversationalist: *"Can I move from personal/conversational processing → thoughtful outward intercession?"*

Reflective Encourager: *"Can I move from thoughtfully carrying others → vulnerably expressing what's happening in me?"*

6. REFLECT: Uncomfortable or Unhelpful? 5 minutes

Bring everyone back.

What felt uncomfortable?

What did you notice?

Did anything surprise you?

Would you try it again?

"You don't have to like it, but it's important to differentiate between something that is unhelpful and something that is just unfamiliar."

We're not trying to make Quiet Listeners become Expressive Prayer Partners.

We're learning we can encounter God somewhere other than our preferred place.

7. LIVE IT: One Stretch Practice, 5 minutes

This week's invitation: **Choose one Stretch Practice.**

Not every day. Just twice this week.

Choose something from the back of the book that doesn't naturally fit your tendency.

Quiet Listener: Pray aloud with someone.

Sacred Conversationalist: Practice five minutes of silence.

Reflective Encourager: Ask someone to pray for you.

Expressive Prayer Partner: Practice listening prayer without music or talking.

Then afterward, write two statements:

- “What felt uncomfortable?”
- “What did I notice?”

We're developing curiosity, not mastery.

Reading Before Week 5

Browse through Pages 74-148. Choose one stretch practice to try twice this week. Then mark 3 other practices. Choose:

- 1 that sounds natural.
- 1 that sounds interesting.
- 1 that sounds challenging.

Bring those three names next week.

Week 5: Prayer in Real Life

Big Idea: Prayer is not limited to a particular place, posture, method, or moment. We can learn to notice and respond to God throughout ordinary life.

Key Question: What if more of my everyday life could become prayer?

Reading Before Session: *Teach Us to Pray*, pages 74-148

Participants were also asked to browse the activities and bring three practices:

- 1 that sounds natural
- 1 that sounds interesting
- 1 that sounds challenging

1. CONNECT: How Did the Stretch Go? 8 minutes

Last week's challenge was to practice something outside their natural tendency twice.

“Who tried something this week that you normally wouldn't have chosen?”

What felt uncomfortable?

What did you notice?

“Did anything that initially felt uncomfortable become meaningful?”

If they didn't like it, that's fine! We're developing spiritual curiosity, not producing prayer-practice experts.

2. DISCOVER: What Does “Pray Continually” Mean? 10 minutes

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18.

Focus on “Pray continually.”

“Is Paul telling us to quit our jobs, abandon our responsibilities, and spend 24 hours a day with our eyes closed?”

Obviously not. So, what could it mean? Prayer is not simply something we do. Prayer is a relationship we learn to live within. We certainly have intentional times of prayer. Jesus did. But we can likewise cultivate an ongoing awareness of God's presence.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4–9.

Notice the rhythms:

- When you sit at home.
- When you walk along the road.
- When you lie down.
- When you get up.

That's ordinary life.

Then read Psalm 139:7–10.

Where is God? Here.

- At work.
- Driving.
- Walking.
- Cooking.
- Waiting.
- Exercising.
- Sitting beside someone in the hospital.
- Watching your children.
- Standing in the grocery store.

The question isn't always, “How do I get into God's presence?” Sometimes the better question is, “How can I become attentive to the God who is already present?”

That's the foundation of today's Prayer Lab.

3. INTRODUCE THE PRAYER LAB, 5 minutes

Set up six stations around the room.

“You're going to spend about five minutes at several different stations. Don't worry about doing anything correctly. Experiment. Pay attention. Stay curious.”

Remind them of language already established in the book:

- Tools, not pressure.
- Pathways, not performance.
- Invitations into deeper relationship with God.

With a one-hour session, I wouldn't try to get everyone through all six stations.

I'd have each person visit four stations, approximately five minutes each.

And here's the twist: tell them not to choose only the ones that sound like their tendency.

Ask them to choose:

One that feels natural.
One that intrigues you.
One that stretches you.
One at random.

4. EXPERIENCE: THE PRAYER LAB

20 minutes

Station 1: BREATH

Breath Prayer

Scripture: Psalm 46:10

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

Slow your breathing.

As you inhale, pray, “Be still...”

As you exhale, pray, “...and know that I am God.”

Repeat slowly.

Then sit quietly.

Notice: *What changes when you connect prayer to something your body does all day long?*

Station 2: SCRIPTURE

Praying Scripture

Scripture: Psalm 23:1–3

Read slowly.

Then turn the words into personal prayer.

For example:

“Lord, You are my Shepherd.”

Pause.

“Where am I resisting Your leading?”

Pause.

“Restore my soul.”

Pause.

Let Scripture provide the language for prayer.

Notice: *What happens when you don't have to come up with the words?*

Station 3: MOVEMENT

Prayer Walk

Go outside or walk in a hallway. No phone. No destination. As you walk, notice.

- What do you see?
- What do you hear?
- What draws your attention?

Turn what you notice into prayer.

See someone? Bless them.

Notice beauty? Thank God.

Notice something broken? Intercede.

Feel tension? Release it.

Walk. Notice. Respond.

That's the entire practice.

Station 4: INTERCESSION

Praying for Someone

Put index cards and pens at this station.

Read **Philippians 1:3–4**.

Then prayerfully ask, “God, who are You bringing to my attention?”

Write down the first name that comes to mind.

Then pray:

God, let them know they are seen.

Let them know they are known.

Let them know they are loved.

Then prayerfully ask, “God, is there anything You want me to do to encourage them?”

Take the card with you to remember.

Station 5: CREATIVITY

Visual Prayer

Put out paper, colored pencils, markers, or pens.

Read Psalm 139:23–24

Draw, doodle, write words, make shapes, create a mind map; whatever helps you express what's happening inside you before God. You don't have to be an artist!

No one needs to see it. There's no artistic goal. Let what is inside you become visible before God.

This may be surprisingly meaningful for people who struggle to find words.

Station 6: ORDINARY LIFE

Everyday Prayer

Place several ordinary objects on a table.

For example: keys, coffee mug, phone, shoes, calendar, water bottle, work bag

Choose one object.

Ask yourself, “Where does this object show up in my ordinary life?”

Then create a tiny prayer trigger.

Examples:

Keys: “*God, go with me.*”

Coffee: “*Thank You for this day.*”

Phone: “*Help my words bring life today.*”

Shoes: “*Show me where You want me to walk.*”

Calendar: “*My time belongs to You.*”

Water: “*Jesus, satisfy my soul.*”

The object isn't sacred. It's becoming a mark of God's presence.

5. REFLECT: What Surprised You? 10 minutes

Bring everybody back together.

“Which station surprised you most?”

Which practice felt most natural?

Which one stretched you?

Was there one you expected to dislike but didn't?

Where did you find it easiest to become attentive to God?

“Did anything today change what you think counts as prayer?”

6. LIVE IT: Find Your Prayer Triggers, 5 minutes

This week's practice: **Choose Three Prayer Triggers**

Pick three things you already do every day. Don't add three new activities.

Attach prayer to the life you're already living.

For example:

When my feet hit the floor: *"Thank You for another day."*

When I drink my first cup of coffee: *"Jesus, awaken my soul to You."*

When I start my car: *"Lead me today."*

When I wash my hands: *"Create in me a clean heart."*

When I open my computer: *"Use my work for Your purposes."*

When I eat: Gratitude.

When I see a notification: Pray for the person.

When I lie down: *"Thank You for carrying me today."*

Don't try to remember to pray more. Let something you already remember remind you to pray.

Reading Before Week 6

Read pages 56-73 again or review what you marked there.

Especially revisit:

- Designing a Prayer Rhythm That Fits Your Life
- My Daily Prayer Rhythm
- Sample Prayer Rhythms by Tendency

Also ask them to browse the remaining pages of Part 3, Everyday Prayers for Everyone.

Bring a list of five practices you'd realistically consider making part of your life.

Not, "These sound spiritually impressive," but "I could actually see myself doing these."

Give everyone a small reminder card as they leave:

GOD IS ALREADY HERE.

When you wake, notice.

When you walk, notice.

When you work, notice.

When you eat, notice.

When you struggle, notice.

When you celebrate, notice.

When you rest, notice.

Notice. Respond. Return.

Week 6: Building Your Prayer Rhythm

Big Idea: A healthy prayer life isn't built through intensity or perfection, but through small, intentional rhythms of returning to God.

Key Question: What sustainable rhythm will help me keep returning to God in the life I'm living?

Reading Before Session

For this week, participants were asked to review pages 56-73.

Especially:

- Designing a Prayer Rhythm That Fits Your Life
- My Daily Prayer Rhythm
- Sample Prayer Rhythms by Tendency

They were also asked to browse the end of Part 3 and bring five prayer practices they could realistically imagine incorporating into their lives.

1. CONNECT: Where Have You Noticed God? 8 minutes

Last week's challenge was **Three Prayer Triggers**.

“What ordinary activity acted as a reminder to pray this week?”

“Did attaching prayer to something you were already doing make prayer feel different?”

For five weeks we've been discovering different ways of praying. Tonight we're going to take what we've learned and build something we can carry with us.

2. DISCOVER: The Goal Is Abiding, 10 minutes

Read John 15:4–5.

Focus on one word: REMAIN or ABIDE, depending on the translation.

“What picture comes to mind when you hear the word remain/abide?”

- Staying. Dwelling. Continuing. Connecting. Returning.

Jesus doesn't say, “Visit me occasionally.” He says: Remain/Abide in me. Prayer is one of the primary ways we intentionally live in that relationship.

This changes the question. Instead of asking, “How much should I pray?” We can ask, “What helps me remain connected to Jesus?” That's a much healthier question.

3. DISCOVER: Rhythm, Not Resolution, 7 minutes

Let's talk briefly about why spiritual resolutions often fail. A familiar cycle plays out: people create elaborate prayer plans, buy journals, decide to wake up an hour earlier, miss a few days, lose momentum, and then spiral into guilt or discouragement.

Put two words on the board or a piece of chart paper: RESOLUTION vs. RHYTHM.

A resolution says, "Starting tomorrow, I'm praying for an hour every morning."

A rhythm asks, "Where can I regularly return to God within the life I really live?"

One is often built around an idealized version of myself. The other starts with reality.

Then read Luke 5:16: "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Note this word: often. There was a recurring pattern: a rhythm.

Consistency doesn't mean perfection. If you miss a rhythm, you haven't failed. You return.

4. REFLECT: What Have I Learned About Myself? 8 minutes

Give them the My Prayer Discovery worksheet and time to complete it.

This allows them to look backward before building forward.

5. EXPERIENCE: Build Your Personal Prayer Rhythm, 15 minutes

Now give them the My Prayer Rhythm worksheet.

Start smaller than you think you should. You don't need to do all five every day.

Ask them to label their new prayer practices with the numbers 1-5. Building a lasting rhythm takes time. Implement the practice labeled 1 in the first month, and add each subsequent practice each month until they are in the flow of all five.

6. TEST YOUR RHYTHM, 5 minutes

After they have completed the worksheet, give them The REAL STRETCH Test

Ask five questions:

R: Is it REALISTIC?

Can I do this in my current life?

E: Is it ENJOYABLE?

Does at least part of this rhythm give me life?

A: Is it ATTENTIVE?
Will these practices help me notice God?

L: Is it LIFE-GIVING?
Will this deepen relationship rather than create guilt?

And does it STRETCH me somewhere?

You need practices that sustain you.

AND

Practices that form you.

7. SHARE: Tell Someone Your Rhythm, 4 minutes

Pair everyone up. Give each person about two minutes to explain their prayer rhythm plan.

The partner isn't supposed to critique it. They just ask one question, "Does this sound realistic for the life you're actually living?"

That's it.

If the person starts describing 90 minutes of spiritual disciplines every morning while raising four children and leaving for work at 6:30, their partner has permission to say, "Really?"

The goal is a sustainable relationship, not impressive planning.

8. COMMISSION: Lord, Keep Teaching Us to Pray, 5 minutes

I would bring the entire six weeks back to Luke 11:1.

At Week 1 we heard, "Lord, teach us to pray." And now six weeks later, we're going to pray the same prayer. Because we haven't mastered prayer. We haven't graduated. We've just learned more about how to keep showing up.

Then remind them of the journey:

Week 1: You're Not Bad at Prayer
Prayer is relationship, not performance.

Week 2: How God Created You to Pray
Different doesn't mean deficient.

Week 3: Praying From Your Strengths
My way isn't the only way, and it isn't the wrong way.

Week 4: Praying Beyond Your Comfort Zone
My tendency is a starting place, not a boundary.

Week 5: Prayer in Real Life
God is already here. Notice. Respond. Return.

Week 6: Building Your Prayer Rhythm
The goal isn't mastering prayer. The goal is remaining with Jesus.

Close together with the simple prayer, "Lord, teach us to pray."

A Final Blessing

Have everyone stand in a circle. If desired, ask the group to grasp hands. Read the final blessing from the book over the group. Leave receiving grace.

What's Your *Natural Prayer Tendency?*

Discover how you most naturally connect with God.

Have you ever wondered why some forms of prayer feel deeply meaningful while others feel awkward, exhausting, or difficult?

We don't all experience prayer in exactly the same way. Our personalities, energy patterns, and the ways we process our thoughts and emotions can influence how we naturally communicate and connect with God.

This assessment isn't designed to put you in a box or tell you the "right way" to pray. It's simply a tool to help you notice the ways you already tend to experience God and discover some prayer practices that may help you grow.



For each question, choose the answer that most naturally describes you, not the answer you think should describe you.

1. After spending a long time with a group of people, I usually...

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| A. Need some time alone to recharge. | B. Feel energized and ready for more interaction. |
|--------------------------------------|---|

2. When something significant happens in my life, I usually...

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Need time to think about it before I know what I want to say. | B. Need to talk about it to understand what I'm thinking and feeling. |
|--|---|

3. When I have uninterrupted time with God, I am most naturally drawn toward...

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. Quiet, solitude, Scripture, reflection, or journaling. | B. Worship, conversation, movement, or interaction. |
|---|---|

4. If someone unexpectedly asks me to pray aloud in a group...

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. I usually wish I'd had some time to think first. | B. I can usually begin praying and discover what I want to say as I go. |
|---|---|

5. I am most likely to notice God's presence when...

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Things become quiet enough for me to pay attention. | B. I am actively engaged in something meaningful. |
|--|---|

6. When I'm carrying a strong emotion...

A. I usually need to sit with it before I can explain what I'm feeling.

B. Talking about it helps me discover what I'm feeling.

7. Which prayer experience sounds more life-giving?

A. An hour alone somewhere beautiful with no interruptions.

B. An hour praying and worshipping with people I love.

8. When I begin praying about something complicated...

A. I've often already spent time thinking about what I'll bring to God.

B. I often begin without knowing exactly where the prayer is going.

9. When life becomes spiritually overwhelming, my instinct is usually to...

A. Pull away from some of the noise and find space with God.

B. Reach toward people, conversations, or shared spiritual experiences.

10. Which statement sounds most like you?

A. My thoughts usually become clear before I express them.

B. My thoughts often become clear while I express them.

11. If you gave me four completely free hours for spiritual renewal, I'd prefer...

A. Space to slow down, reflect, read, walk, journal, or simply be with God.

B. An engaging experience with worship, serving, or shared prayer.

12. Which statement best describes your prayer life?

A. I tend to experience something internally before expressing it.

B. Expressing something to God or others helps me understand it.

SCORING YOUR ASSESSMENT

ENERGY

Questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11

Mostly A:

You tend toward **introverted energy**. Solitude and lower-stimulation environments often help you become spiritually attentive.

Mostly B:

You tend toward **extroverted energy**. Engagement, participation, and connection with others often awaken your spiritual attentiveness.

PROCESSING

Questions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

Mostly A:

You tend toward **internal processing**. You generally think and process before expressing yourself.

Mostly B:

You tend toward **external processing**. Expression itself often helps you discover what you think and feel.



The Quiet Listener

Introvert + Internal



The Sacred Conversationalist

Introvert + External



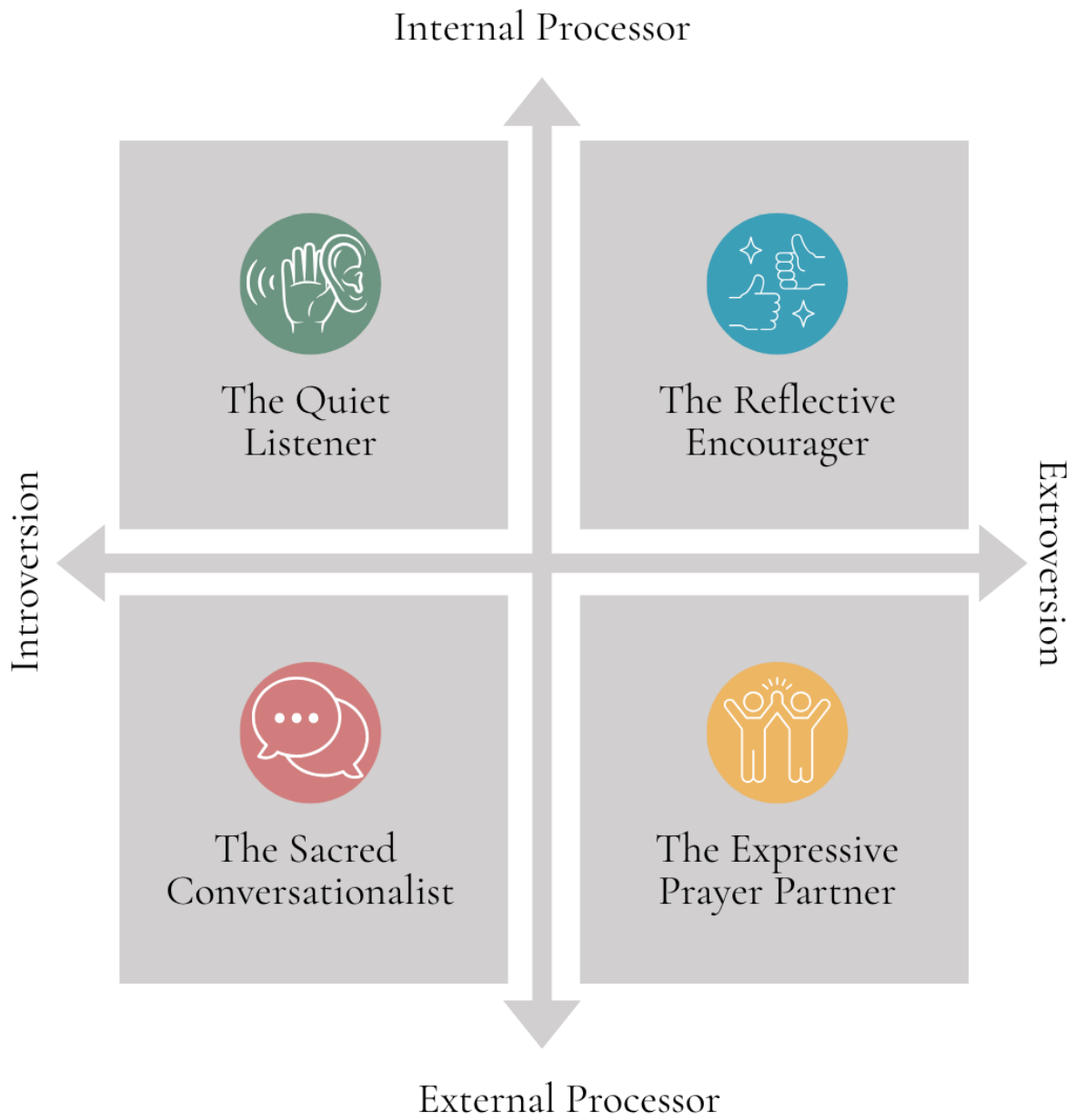
The Reflective Encourager

Extrovert + Internal



The Expressive Prayer Partner

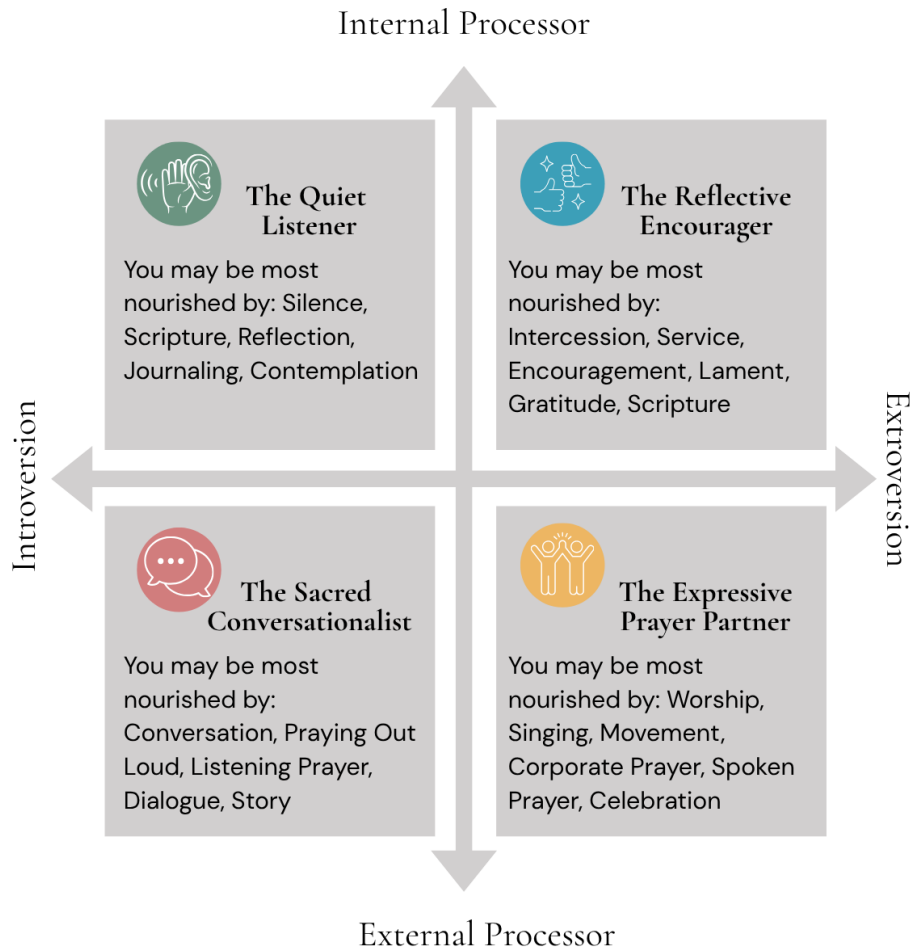
Extrovert + External



YOUR NATURAL PRAYER TENDENCY

Where Your Energy and Processing Meet

Find where your energy meets your processing style.



Remember: Your Natural Prayer Tendency is a starting place, not a boundary. You can grow in all four areas and experience God in many ways.

What Next? Use the insights from this assessment to explore prayer practices that fit your natural tendencies and to stretch into new experiences with God.



The Quiet Listener

Introverted Energy // Internal Processing

For the Quiet Listener, prayer is rarely rushed or highly expressive. It is often quiet, thoughtful, contemplative, and deeply personal. While others may experience God through outward participation, the Quiet Listener often encounters God in silence, reflection, listening, and a gentle awareness of His presence.

For the Quiet Listener, prayer may seem less like a conversation across the table and more like a calm and present awareness of being with a trusted friend you deeply love.

Preferred Prayer Environments

The Quiet Listener is often most spiritually refreshed in environments that feel peaceful, unhurried, quiet, reflective, and include low stimulation. They may especially connect with God through:

- solitude
- prayer journaling
- contemplative prayer
- nature walks
- silent retreats
- candlelight prayer
- Scripture meditation
- breath prayer
- sitting quietly in God's presence

Common Struggles

The Quiet Listener may quietly wrestle with feelings of spiritual inadequacy in church cultures that emphasize visible participation or verbal expression. Internally, they may compare themselves to people who pray confidently out loud or appear emotionally expressive in worship and wonder if something is wrong with their own spirituality. They may struggle with hesitation in communal prayer, overthinking, difficulty expressing emotions verbally, isolation, or waiting for the "perfect" words before praying honestly.

Spiritual Strengths

Quiet Listeners frequently excel at:

- listening prayer
- discernment
- thoughtful reflection
- sustained intercession
- meditation on Scripture
- emotional awareness
- noticing subtle movements of God's Spirit

Growth Invitations

For The Quiet Listener, spiritual growth may include learning to pray with others more openly, becoming comfortable expressing needs verbally, allowing trusted people into their spiritual world, practicing vulnerability, or learning that spoken prayer does not have to be polished to be meaningful. Growth may also involve recognizing that God sometimes speaks not only in silence, but also through community.



The Sacred Conversationalist

Introverted Energy // External Processing

For the Sacred Conversationalist, prayer is often where thoughts become untangled, and emotions begin to make sense. They may not always know what they believe or feel before they begin praying, but as they speak openly with God, clarity slowly emerges.

Prayer for them is deeply relational. Rather than formal or highly structured prayer, The Sacred Conversationalist often approaches God conversationally, speaking honestly, vulnerably, and personally, almost as if talking with a trusted friend.

Preferred Prayer Environments

The Sacred Conversationalist often connects best with God in environments that feel emotionally safe, personal, authentic, conversational, and relationally intimate. They may especially connect with God through:

- one-on-one prayer
- prayer walks
- whispered prayer
- conversational prayer
- spiritual direction
- praying in the car
- processing aloud with God
- praying with a trusted friend

Common Struggles

Sacred Conversationalists may struggle with fear of praying publicly, feeling emotionally exposed and vulnerable, self-consciousness about their words, difficulty finding safe spiritual spaces, or feeling drained by large-group prayer settings. Some Sacred Conversationalists may quietly assume they are spiritually inconsistent because their prayer life feels conversational rather than polished or structured. Others may hesitate to pray honestly because they fear saying the “wrong” thing aloud.

Spiritual Strengths

Sacred Conversationalists frequently excel at:

- relational prayer
- emotional openness
- vulnerability
- empathy
- compassionate listening
- conversational intimacy with God
- helping others feel spiritually safe

Growth Invitations

For The Sacred Conversationalist, spiritual growth may include becoming comfortable with silence, learning to listen without immediately filling space with words, developing reflective practices, slowing down emotionally, or trusting God’s presence even when words are absent. Growth may also involve learning that prayer does not always require immediate clarity.



The Reflective Encourager

Extroverted Energy // Internal Processing

For The Reflective Encourager, prayer is often both personal and communal. They may feel deeply connected to God while praying for others, participating in worship, serving in ministry, or gathering with people they love. Yet even in community, they often reflect deeply and process carefully before speaking or responding outwardly.

Prayer for them often becomes a thoughtful way to carry people, burdens, hopes, and concerns before God.

Preferred Prayer Environments

The Reflective Encourager often connects best with God in environments that feel relational, purposeful, emotionally meaningful, structured, and spiritually grounded. They may connect with God through:

- group prayer with trusted people
- guided prayer gatherings
- worship services
- prayer teams
- praying for others
- structured intercession
- Scripture-guided prayer
- retreats
- reflective prayer experiences

Common Struggles

Reflective Encouragers may struggle with emotional exhaustion, carry others' burdens too heavily, have difficulty slowing down, overcommit, feel pressure to always encourage others, and hesitate in spontaneous prayer settings. Some Reflective Encouragers may also quietly fear disappointing people if they need solitude or reflection after spending time in social or ministry-heavy environments. But even those who love people deeply still need space to be alone with God.

Spiritual Strengths

The Reflective Encourager frequently excels at:

- intercession
- pastoral care
- discernment
- encouragement
- thoughtful leadership
- emotionally attentive prayer
- faithfully supporting others spiritually

Growth Invitations

For The Reflective Encourager, spiritual growth may include learning to receive care rather than only giving it, creating intentional space for solitude, practicing stillness without productivity, setting emotional boundaries, or learning that they do not have to carry every burden for everyone around them.



The Expressive Prayer Partner

Extroverted Energy // External Processing

For the Expressive Prayer Partner, prayer is rarely passive or purely internal. It is often dynamic, participatory, emotionally alive, and deeply relational. As they speak, worship, pray aloud, encourage others, or engage spiritually with people around them, they often become more aware of both their own hearts and God's presence. For them, prayer frequently feels like movement. Rather than needing long periods of silence before engaging with God, the Expressive Prayer Partner often connects most naturally through active participation and spontaneous expression.

Preferred Prayer Environments

The Expressive Prayer Partner often connects best with God in environments that feel relational, energetic, participatory, expressive, and spiritually alive. They may especially connect with God through:

- group prayer
- worship gatherings
- prayer meetings
- praying out loud
- call-and-response prayer
- spontaneous prayer
- praying over others
- worship music
- interactive spiritual experiences

Common Struggles

Because they process externally, Expressive Prayer Partners may also struggle with impulsiveness, rushing, difficulty slowing down, speaking more than listening, emotional reactivity, or overreliance on external stimulation in prayer. Some Expressive Prayer Partners may unintentionally equate emotional intensity with spiritual depth, assuming prayer will only “work” if it feels emotionally powerful or highly engaging. Others may fear silence because it feels unfamiliar or emotionally vulnerable.

Spiritual Strengths

The Expressive Prayer Partner often carries tremendous spiritual energy, courage, and relational warmth.

These individuals frequently excel at:

- encouraging others
- creating spiritual momentum
- inviting participation
- emotional honesty
- responsiveness
- public prayer
- helping people feel welcomed

Growth Invitations

For The Expressive Prayer Partner, spiritual growth may include: learning to slow down, practicing silence, becoming more internally attentive, listening before responding, or learning to remain with God even when emotional intensity is absent. Growth may also involve discovering that sometimes God speaks most clearly beneath the noise and activity.



The Quiet Listener

Introverted Energy // Internal Processing

Listening Prayer

Read Psalm 46:10.

Then spend five minutes in silence.

Begin a time of prayer with, "God, I am listening."

No agenda. No need to hear anything dramatic. Simply notice.

Afterward, write one sentence, "God, what I'm noticing is..."



The Sacred Conversationalist

Introverted Energy // External Processing

Honest Conversation

Read Psalm 142:1–2.

Take a short walk alone or find a private place.

Begin your prayer time with, “God, here's what's really going on with me...”

And talk to God. No polished words. No prayer voice. No editing. Just conversation. The purpose isn't to give God information. It's to become honest in His presence.



The Reflective Encourager

Extroverted Energy // Internal Processing

Intercessory Prayer

Read Philippians 1:3–4.

Then ask God to bring one person to mind.
Write their name down.

Spend several minutes prayerfully
considering, What might this person need
from God right now?

Then pray:

God, give them _____.

God, help them _____.

God, remind them _____.

Finish by asking God, “Is there some way I
could encourage this person today?”



The Expressive Prayer Partner

Extroverted Energy // External Processing

Worship & Spoken Prayer

(Have worship music playing)

Read a portion of Psalm 150.

Pray in whatever outward way feels natural: sing, speak, stand, walk, raise their hands, pray aloud, or pray with another person.

Toward the end of the time, gather as a group and spend a couple of minutes praying aloud together.



The Quiet Listener

Introverted Energy // Internal Processing

Cross the Quadrant: Spoken Communal Prayer

In groups of 2–3, read Psalm 100:1–2 aloud and then take turns praying short prayers of praise and gratitude aloud.

Growth invitation: Move what's happening inside you outward and allow others to participate in your prayer.



The Sacred Conversationalist

Introverted Energy // External Processing

Cross the Quadrant: Thoughtful Intercessory Prayer

Choose someone from the group and write their name on an index card. Spend several minutes quietly reflecting:

- What do I know about this person's life?
- What might God desire for them?
- What Scripture or word of encouragement comes to mind?
- What do I want to ask God to do in their life?

Then write a short prayer for that person on the card and give it to them.

Growth invitation: Move beyond processing your own heart conversationally with God and quietly carry someone else's heart before Him.



The Reflective Encourager

Extroverted Energy // Internal Processing

Crossing the Quadrant: Receiving Vulnerability

Find a partner. In pairs, share, “Here's what's really going on with me right now...”

Don't talk about someone you're worried about.

Don't talk about someone you're helping.

Don't turn it into ministry.

Talk about you.

Then allow the other person to listen and pray for you.

Switch and repeat with the other person.

Growth invitation: Move from internally carrying others to externally processing your own heart with someone you trust.



The Expressive Prayer Partner

Extroverted Energy // External Processing

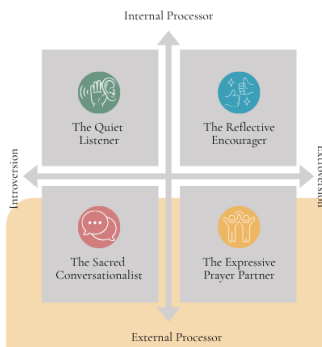
Cross the Quadrant: Silence & Listening Prayer

Read Psalm 46:10, then spend five minutes alone and completely silent.

Begin your prayer internally with,
“God, I am here. I’m listening.”

No music, talking, or group interaction.

Growth invitation: Allow God to meet you without relying on outward expression or stimulation.



The Prayer Lab

Breath Prayer

Scripture: Read Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Slow your breathing.

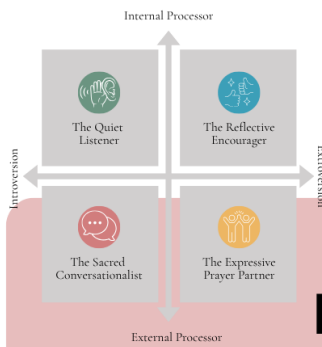
As you inhale, pray, "Be still..."

As you exhale, pray, "...and know that I am God."

Repeat slowly.

Then simply sit quietly.

Notice: What changes when you connect prayer to something your body does all day long?



The Prayer Lab

Praying Scripture

Read Psalm 23:1–3 slowly. Then turn the words into personal prayer.

For example:

“Lord, You are my Shepherd.”

(Pause.)

“Where am I resisting Your leading?”

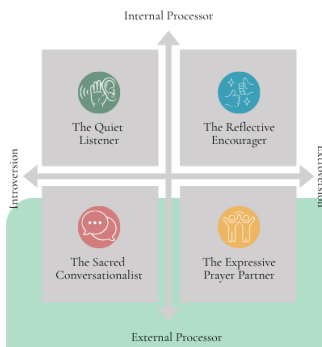
(Pause.)

“Restore my soul.”

(Pause.)

Let Scripture provide the language for prayer.

Notice: What happens when you don't have to come up with the words?



The Prayer Lab

Prayer Walk

Go outside or walk in a hallway. No phone. No destination. As you walk, simply notice.

- What do you see?
- What do you hear?
- What draws your attention?

Turn what you notice into prayer.

See someone? Bless them.

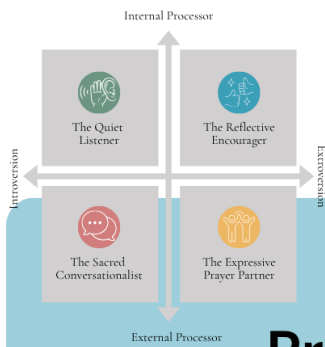
Notice beauty? Thank God.

Notice something broken? Intercede.

Feel tension? Release it.

Walk. Notice. Respond.

That's the entire practice.



The Prayer Lab

Praying for Someone

You will see index cards and pens at this station.

Read Philippians 1:3–4.

Then prayerfully ask, “God, who are You bringing to my attention?”

Write down the first name that comes to mind.

Then pray:

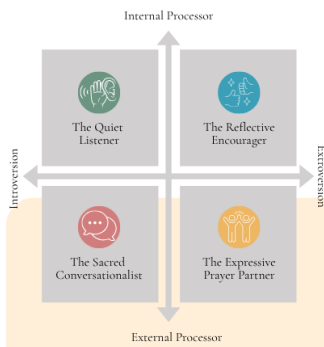
God, let them know they are seen.

Let them know they are known.

Let them know they are loved.

Then prayerfully ask, “God, is there anything You want me to do to encourage them?”

Take the card with you to remember.



The Prayer Lab

Visual Prayer

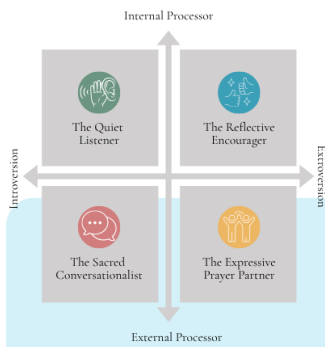
In this station, you will find: paper, colored pencils, markers, or pens.

Read Psalm 139:23–24

Draw, doodle, write words, make shapes, create a mind map; whatever helps you express what's happening inside you before God. You don't have to be an artist!

No one needs to see it. There's no artistic goal. Let what is inside you become visible before God.

This may be surprisingly meaningful for you if you struggle to find words to express yourself.



The Prayer Lab

Everyday Prayer

You will find several ordinary objects in this station.

Choose one object.

Ask yourself, "Where does this object show up in my ordinary life?"

Then create a tiny prayer trigger.

Examples:

Keys: "God, go with me."

Coffee: "Thank You for this day."

Phone: "Help my words bring life today."

Shoes: "Show me where You want me to walk."

Calendar: "My time belongs to You."

Water: "Jesus, satisfy my soul."

The object isn't sacred. It's simply becoming a reminder of God's presence.



GOD IS ALREADY HERE.

When you wake, notice.

When you walk, notice.

When you work, notice.

When you eat, notice.

When you struggle, notice.

When you celebrate, notice.

When you rest, notice.

Notice. Respond. Return.



GOD IS ALREADY HERE.

When you wake, notice.

When you walk, notice.

When you work, notice.

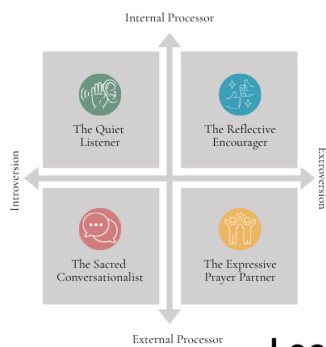
When you eat, notice.

When you struggle, notice.

When you celebrate, notice.

When you rest, notice.

Notice. Respond. Return.



My Prayer Discovery

Looking Back Before Building Forward

Before creating your personal prayer rhythm, take a few minutes to notice what you've learned about yourself and your relationship with God during this experience. There are no right answers. Pay attention to what has given you life, what has challenged you, and where God may be inviting you next.

1. My Natural Prayer Tendency is:

2. I most naturally connect with God when...

3. The prayer practices that have felt most life-giving to me are...

4. Something that surprised me about prayer during these six weeks is...

5. A prayer practice that challenged or stretched me was...

What did I learn from it?

6. I tend to lose awareness of God's presence when...

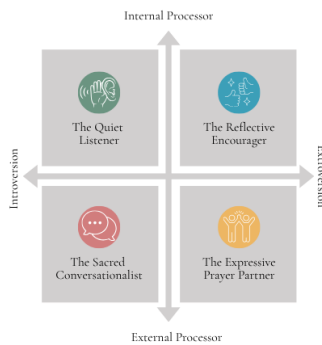
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7. One part of my ordinary life where I'd like to become more aware of God is...

8. One belief about prayer I want to leave behind is...

9. One truth about prayer I want to carry forward is...

10. Right now, I sense God inviting me to...



My Prayer Rhythm

Creating a Sustainable Rhythm
for Remaining with God

Your prayer rhythm isn't a list of spiritual requirements. It's a simple plan for returning to God through practices that help you connect, grow, and remain attentive to His presence. Build this rhythm for the life you're actually living, not the life you think you should be living.

BUILD YOUR RHYTHM

On the page that follows, record your prayer rhythm using these prompts. For each section, choose a prayer practice from the book or another you have found meaningful. Write the name of the practice and where or when you will incorporate that into your new rhythm.

We don't build a rhythm by starting everything all at once. So as you plan your rhythm, put a 1 next to the practice you will begin immediately and practice for a full month, a 2 next to the practice you will add in the 2nd month, a 3 for the 3rd month, and so on until by the 5th month you have implemented the full prayer rhythm.

Ground: What helps me become present with God?

Examples: silence, breath prayer, Scripture, gratitude, fixed-hour prayer

Connect: What helps me relate honestly to God?

Examples: conversational prayer, worship, journaling, prayer walks

Reflect: What helps me notice what's happening in me and what God may be doing?

Examples: Examen, Lectio Divina, journaling, listening prayer

Share: How will prayer connect me with other people?

Examples: prayer partner, intercession, small-group prayer, receiving prayer

Stretch: What will occasionally take me beyond my natural tendency?

Choose something that helps you encounter God outside your usual preferences.

My Prayer *Rhythm*

