



PRAYER

PRAISE | LISTEN | ASK

TALK WITH GOD

TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Questions to Discuss With Your Family or Group

by Trevecca Okholm

Spend some time talking about prayer with the children in your life! The purpose for table conversations is to have a useful guide to begin conversation around each practice. These ideas might be used in a variety of settings: at church during worship; at home around the dinner table; in the car; in Sunday School classes; at camp. Where will you use this table conversation?

What is prayer?

Prayer is how we communicate with God. God the Father loves His children and desires for His children to know and love Him. Prayer is a primary way that we get to know who God is and experience His love for us. Through prayer and relationship God meets us where we are and invites us to become more like Him.

- How do you communicate with people you love? What are some ways you connect with them? Do you always use words? How might you communicate with God in some of the same ways?
- What things do you remember that God has done for you, your family, or your church? What Bible stories can you think of that show who God is and what He has done? What do you want to say to God about these things? How might they lead you to praise Him?
- What does it look like to listen to someone? How do you think we can listen to God? Where are some places we might look for God to speak?
- What kinds of things do you want to ask God? Do you wonder about anything in the world or in your life? Do you wonder about God and how He has and does work in the world? He'd love to hear your questions!

Daily Check-in

- Was there a time today when you felt like praying?
- What do you think is the most important way to pray? Is it "thankful" prayer or "help me" prayer? What about a prayer for a friend or someone who needs help?
- Was there any time today when you wished you'd remembered to pray?

How do we practice prayer?

We often think of prayer as talking, and much of the time it is! But prayer can also be listening or simply being with God, aware of His presence. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Write Your Prayers on Your Doorposts (and everywhere!)

Begin by reading aloud Deuteronomy 6:1-9. As a family or group, you may want to write out a prayer that you can attach to your front door (so you see it every time you go out). You might also decide to write the same or different prayers together, and attach them in any or all of these places:

- Your car's dashboard—so you are reminded to pray every time you drive.
- Your family refrigerator—so you are reminded to pray every time you pass by.
- On the bathroom mirror—so you are reminded to pray every time you brush your teeth or wash your face!
- Or even take the mattress off the beds and write a prayer right on the bed slats! This is a great place for parents to write prayers for each child so that they will know that they are sleeping right on top of your prayers for them!
- Parents, write a prayer on a sticky note and stick it to your child's lunch, or to their school notebook, or even inside a school book, so your child can be reminded that you are praying for them everyday! It is also a fun idea to add a sticky note prayer to your spouses' lunch, briefcase, or backpack, or to their bedside lamp.

ACTS Model for Prayer Time

Begin by talking about the different ways of prayer that Jesus modeled for His disciples (see Matthew 6:1-15). We sometimes call this the ACTS prayer.

- **A for ADORATION**

Does your family or group prayer time include awe, wonder, and praise for who God is? That is the way the Lord's Prayer begins!

- **C for CONFESSION**

How can your family or group create space in your busy lives to confess to God and ask God to forgive us as we forgive others?

- **T for THANKSGIVING**

Does your family or group pay attention each day to the wonders around you? Do you intentionally praise and thank God for the beauty of the earth and our daily bread?

- **S for SUPPLICATION**

OK, this is a big word, but it really just means the stuff we ask God for! So often, our prayer life is mainly just asking God for stuff; however, as Jesus models for us, asking God to supply our needs—even for health—should only come after Adoration, Confession, and Thanksgiving.

Finally, talk about how your family can put adoration, confession, and thanksgiving first in your prayer life. Who knows, when you do, you just might find that there is less stuff to ask for in your supplications.

Design a Group Prayer Journal

Keep track of what your family or group is praying for. It can be really encouraging to keep a prayer journal for a month, a season, or a whole year, and go back to reread your prayers and discover how God has been active in response (maybe not always in the ways you had expected!)

Purchase a spiral bound journal or notebook, or special hardcover journal. Let children help decide on the journal that is most meaningful for your family. Write the date and your family prayer in the front. Then, each day or week, when you gather to practice faith together, write down your prayer requests, look at them, and/or add to them.