



## Prayer Series - Session 1: What is prayer?

**\*{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

**Overview:** *(Please read to your group before the Opening Prayer)*

### **If you just completed the Introduction series of Videos read this section:**

We've just completed the Introduction series of videos and will be starting the next series. As we move forward and into the Prayer series, be sure to pay attention to the weekly challenges and remember to be patient with yourself. When we talk with God, there is no right or wrong. God is always waiting patiently for us to share with Him and is waiting for our response. Let's now start with our Opening Prayer.

Or

### **If you just completed the Relationship with God series of Videos read this section:**

We've just completed the Relationship with God series of videos and will be starting the next theme of videos. In summary, our past videos covered topics about Who Jesus Is, Why He Died The Way He Did, Sin, Struggling with Forgiveness and How God Can Heal Our Wounds. We ended with an insightful talk about the importance of the Holy Spirit and evaluating if God is at the center of our lives.

As we move forward and into the Prayer series, be sure to pay attention to the weekly challenges and remember to be patient with yourself. When we talk with God, there is no right or wrong. God is always waiting patiently for us to share with Him and is waiting for our response. Let's now start with our Opening Prayer.

### **Opening Prayer:**

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

Read: **Jeremiah 29:11-14** – Calling the Lord

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

*Heavenly Father, we thank You for your perfect love for us. Open our hearts and our minds so that we may encounter You always and listen to Your heart. We ask this all in your holy name. Amen.*

### **Reflection or Discussion Question:**

1. In Jeremiah 29:12 we hear, "*When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you.*" Do think/feel God listens to you in prayer? Why or why not?

{Let your group know that you will be watching two short videos today rather than just one.}

### **YouTube Video:**

Fr. Mark Toups – Question 1 (3:42 Min) - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-3\\_Jdz8H3Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-3_Jdz8H3Y)

Fr. Mark Toups – Question 2 (4:52 Min) - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cx7CbMKX\\_9g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cx7CbMKX_9g)

# Prayer Series - Session 1: Continued

## Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. What was your understanding of prayer before watching the videos?
3. How has your understanding changed, based on how Fr. Toups described prayer from the Catechism of the Catholic Church? {Leader: CCC 2567 *God calls man first. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation.*}
4. Fr. Toups reminds us that our first step in prayer is always a response to the God who is tirelessly calling us. What does this make you think/feel? Will having this understanding cause you to enter into prayer differently?
5. What are some of the distractions that keep you from prayer?
6. What are the ways you put yourself in a position to be found by God in prayer?
7. Describe a moment where you have felt lost and then been found again through prayer.

## Session Challenge:

Put yourself into a position to be found by God:

1. Recognize that God is tirelessly pursuing you.
2. Respond to God's call by opening yourself up to God's presence and love.
3. Take time to honestly evaluate and LIST those things in your life that pull you away from encountering God. Be specific and take these to God in prayer. Ask Him for the courage to remove them from your life and take active steps to follow His will.

**Closing Prayer:** (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.) *Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for calling us to You. Help us to respond fully and joyfully to Your call so that we may turn away from those things keeping us from You. Over the next several weeks, help us to continually focus on putting ourselves into a position to be found. We pray this in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*