

Prayer: 6-Week D-Group Guide



Objective:

- *By the end of this Arena, we pray you will have a living, daily practice of abiding—practically making your home—in Jesus. This Arena is designed to make prayer and life with Jesus more approachable, less mysterious, and to give you hands-on experience.*
- *The abundant life Jesus promised is not abundant because of what we do, see, or achieve, but because we have Him—whether we experience much or little in this life.*

Advise:

- *Many people who have known Jesus—or been around church for a long time—carry a quiet “been there, done that” posture. Sometimes we laugh things off so we don’t have to take them seriously. If that’s where you are, you will miss much of what God wants to give you here.*
- *We can project confidence and competence with others, but not with God. He already knows what your prayer life is really like, where your heart actually is, and whether your life with Him is as rich and abundant as it appears.*
- *Approach this Arena with humility and teachability, and who knows what God may want to share with you. Don’t—and it will likely become just another church d-group semester.*
- *Make space to do the readings and answer the questions honestly. You are only cheating yourself out of what could be. We deeply desire for you to know a rich, lived life of communication with Jesus—because it is out of that abundance, or lack of it, that we live the rest of our lives*

PREPARATION FOR FORMATION WEEK 1

- **Read** the **Introduction** and **Chapter 1** from the book, “The Intimate God” by Alan Kraft and **complete Exercises** at the end of chapter 1
- Reflect on and answer the following questions before next week:
 1. If someone wanted to learn how to pray, would your actual prayer life be a helpful example for them to follow as you follow Jesus? Why or why not?
 2. Does your current life of prayer genuinely form contentment in you? If nothing in your life changed—no new achievements, experiences, or opportunities—would your present relationship with Jesus, as it is now, be enough for lasting contentment? Why or why not?
 3. How was your experience with the Father’s love this past week?
 4. What was it like to imagine yourself in the prodigal son story?

ARENA WEEK 1 (2/8/26) - How does God Feel about You?

- *Key Takeaway:* Relationship with God is meant to be experienced, not just known about.

Gathered Discussion

1. In Zephaniah 3:17 and Numbers 6:24–26, we see the heart of God toward us—a loving parent delighting in and smiling toward His children. How fully do you experience God’s love for you? Don’t give the Sunday School answer (I know God loves me, etc.). The question is, How fully are you experiencing His love for you? Do you regularly feel His delight in you?
2. Paul talks in Romans 5:5 about the Holy Spirit being poured out into our hearts so that we can experience the lavish love of God the Father. What do you think keeps people from experiencing in their hearts this lavish love? Feel free to share from your own experience.
3. Romans 8:16 describes how the Spirit “testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” What does this “testifying” look and feel like in practical terms? How do we more fully experience this crucial ministry of the Spirit?
4. What is the potential long-term impact of pursuing a Christianity in which the love of the Father is never truly experienced in a person’s heart?
5. Take some time to talk about how you did with the three exercises for this week. Were they helpful in you experiencing the Lord’s love more deeply? Discuss.
6. In light of what you learned in this week’s content, what are some practical ways you can experience the Father’s love more deeply this coming week?

PREPARATION FOR ARENA WEEK 2 (2/15/26)

- **Read Chapter 2** from the book, “The Intimate God”, **complete the exercises** at the end of the chapter, and answer the following questions:
1. Were you able to create space in your life to slow down and practice being present in the moment?
 2. How was your experience of stillness? Was it difficult? Challenging? Meaningful?

ARENA WEEK 2 (2/15/26) – Stillness

- *Key Takeaway:* Stillness habitually slows us down to become more aware of God.

Gathered Discussion

1. How would you summarize the purpose of practicing stillness?
2. Take a few minutes and talk about your experience of stillness in the exercises for this week. How was it? Easy? Difficult? Life-giving? Frustrating?
3. What are you finding are the biggest barriers to your experience of stillness? For each barrier, discuss a strategy to help you navigate that barrier.
4. How do you handle distractions that come to mind when you try to practice stillness?
5. Let's practice as a group. Take a minute or two of silence to tune in to your heart. What emotions are you experiencing right now from the day? Feel free to use the S-H-A-D-E-S acronym (page 31). Now share with the group one or two of the things going on in your heart.
6. As you think about the practice of stillness becoming a part of your life, share with your group how you plan to create space for this, including the "where" and "when" of your plan.

PREPARATION FOR ARENA WEEK 3 (3/8/26)

Read **Chapter 3** from the book, "The Intimate God", **complete the exercises** at the end of the chapter, and answer the following questions:

1. Thinking about this past two weeks, how fully have you experienced the Lord's love for you?
2. How was your experience of listening to Jesus in your times of stillness?

ARENA WEEK 3 (3/8/26) – Listening to Jesus

- Key Takeaway: God's wants to speak to us. Silence, listening, and testing against Scripture puts us in a place to hear Him.

Gathered Discussion

1. What have been your past experiences in this area of listening to the voice of Jesus? Have they been positive, negative, or something else?
2. Take a few minutes to talk about how the exercises were for you this week. Did you feel like you heard Jesus' voice? Discuss.
3. What is the difference between hearing and listening? What are some things that are required in order to listen well to another person?
4. How does God most often whisper to your inner being? A thought, a word, a picture, a song, etc.? How attentive are you these days to that whisper?
5. What do you think of the idea of asking God specific questions and then listening to His response?
6. How do you personally try to discern whether what you are hearing is from God?

PREPARATION FOR ARENA WEEK 4 (3/22/26)

- **Read Chapter 4** from the book, "The Intimate God", **complete the exercises** at the end of the chapter, and answer the following questions:
 1. How are you feeling about your experience of stillness and prayer over the past few weeks?
 2. What are you hearing God speak to your heart?

ARENA WEEK 4 (3/22/26) – Prayer

- *Key Takeaway:* Prayer isn't the preparation for the work of ministry - it is the work.

Gathered Discussion

1. What is your biggest struggle or challenge in your experience of prayer?
2. How was your experience with the prayer exercises for this week?
3. What part or parts of the Lord's Prayer have already been a regular part of your prayer life, and which parts of the Lord's Prayer are a new addition?
4. When you think about praying "Your kingdom come" and partnering with God to bring His rule into certain situations or needs in our world, what specific areas of need come to mind?
5. Why do you think Jesus included in His prayer a regular opportunity not only to ask for forgiveness but to choose to forgive others? What specific impact might this have in our lives as we include it in our prayer experience?

PREPARATION FOR ARENA WEEK 5 (4/19/26)

- **Read Chapter 5** from the book, "The Intimate God", **complete the exercises** at the end of the chapter, and answer the following questions:
 1. How are these three practices impacting your relationship with Jesus?
 2. Do you need to make any adjustments in terms of scheduling or priorities?

ARENA WEEK 5 (4/19/26) – ENGAGING IN SCRIPTURE

- *Key Takeaway:* If Jesus loved the Scriptures and He is our teacher then we should develop habits to help us love them too.

Gathered Discussion

1. In your spiritual journey, what has been your personal experience with engaging with the Bible?
2. Read Psalm 1:1–4. What does it mean to “delight” in God’s Word? What would cause a person to delight in Scripture?
3. Psalm 1 says that a person who meditates on the Word is like a tree planted by streams of water. Take some time to tease out this analogy. In what ways does meditation have this impact?
4. How was your practice of meditation in the exercises for this week? Share one specific thing that Jesus spoke to your heart from one of the passages you looked at.

PREPARATION FOR ARENA WEEK 6 (4/26/26)

- **Read Chapter 6** from the book, “The Intimate God”, **complete the exercises** at the end of the chapter, and answer the following questions:
 1. How was your experience of practicing the presence of Jesus this past week?
 2. Which of the suggested tools (conversational prayer, simple prayer, delight pauses, exploring our emotions) did you find most helpful?

ARENA WEEK 6 (4/26/26) – Practicing the Presence of Jesus

- *Key Takeaway:* There is no sacred and secular divide. Practice the presence of Jesus and you'll see it is all sacred.

Gathered Discussion

1. How was your experience of practicing the presence of Jesus this past week?
2. Which of the suggested tools most resonated with you—conversational prayer, simple prayer, delight pauses, or stopping to explore your emotions?
3. In Genesis 28:16, Jacob declares, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” Being aware of God’s presence with us can make the most “nonspiritual” activity a “spiritual” activity. Think of an area or activity in your life that feels unspiritual. What would it look like to intentionally practice the presence of Jesus in that place?
4. Have someone in your group slowly read John 15:5 a few times. As you meditate on this verse, what stands out to you?
5. What would you expect to be some of the fruit of a life lived with Jesus, being aware of His presence throughout your day?
6. What specific steps will you take this week to grow in this area?

EXTRA PREPARATION FOR SUMMER

- **Read Chapter 7** from the book, “The Intimate God”, **complete the exercises** at the end of the chapter.
- The practice of Sabbath will completely restructure your relationship to work, school, technology, and time if you let it be the gift to you God created it to be. It is an act of resistance to the ways the world wants to shape you. If you have been running after Jesus in prayer this semester then we highly recommend you finish the book and implement the final practice of sabbath into your life.
- Ask each other how these practices are going throughout the summer.