



## PRAYER HABITS

## CONVERSATION #1: BUILDING A PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE

### ICEBREAKER: PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

To begin our conversation today, let's read a few pairs of options. For each one, vote for what you prefer. There are no right or wrong answers, so just go with your instinct.

- Singing in the car alone 🎤 or singing in front of people
- Texting 📩 or calling 📞
- Working out at home 🏠 or at the gym 💪
- Watching a movie alone 🎬 or with friends
- Talking out loud to yourself 😃 or journaling quietly
- Trying new food at home 🍽️ or in a restaurant
- Learning something from a tutorial 📺 or figuring it out by trial and error
- Dancing in your room 🎵 or dancing at a wedding
- Practicing before trying something new 🎯 or just jumping in
- Posting a thought online 📱 or keeping it in your notes app
- Talking through a problem with someone 🧑 or thinking it through alone
- Listening to music with headphones 🎵 or on a speaker
- Celebrating a win quietly 🏆 or telling everyone about it

### STUDY: LIVING ON A PRAYER

In this phase of faith, it's natural to think first about how faith connects to *your own life*. That's not a flaw - it's part of learning and growing. Over time, though, growth happens as faith moves from something we mostly receive from others to something we begin to take ownership of ourselves.

Prayer is often where this tension shows up most clearly. Many people learn how to pray by listening to others pray or by joining in during group moments. Those experiences matter, but if we're not careful, they can quietly replace developing a private prayer life of our own. We participate, but we don't initiate. In this next set of conversations, we will look more closely at how to develop personal prayer habits and learn how to talk with God. To begin, let's see how Jesus spoke about prayer.

### READ MATTHEW 6:5-6

- What stands out to you from this teaching from Jesus about prayer?

It's important to notice that Jesus isn't criticizing public prayer itself - He's warning against prayer that's done to be noticed. He gently shifts the focus from being *seen by others* to being *known by God*. Prayer isn't meant to be a spiritual performance; it's meant to be a private, ongoing way of life.

## DISCUSS:

- If you had to score your comfort level with prayer 1-10, where would it rank right now?
- Where are you most comfortable praying - alone or with others? Why?
- What feels harder about private prayer compared to public prayer?
- How do you know when your prayer life is being *fed by others* instead of fed by you?
- If prayer were removed from group settings, what would remain in your personal life?

## READ LUKE 5:16

Take a moment to process what this one verse says. For Jesus, prayer was an intentional and regular practice. Jesus didn't pray only in public moments or when others were watching. He regularly pulled away from crowds, expectations, and demands to be alone with His Father. Even when people needed Him, even when His ministry was busy, He prioritized private prayer.

This wasn't about religious discipline or checking a box - it was about a relationship. Prayer was how Jesus stayed connected to His Father, listened for direction, and received strength for what He was called to do.

## ACTIVITY: BRAINSTORM – PUBLIC FAITH, PRIVATE PRACTICE

In the space below, draw a line dividing the section into two. On the left side, brainstorm all of the PUBLIC spiritual practices you can think of. Then on the right side, write down spiritual practices you do privately.

## CHALLENGE: CLOSE THE DOOR

For the next week, choose a specific private place where you can be alone - maybe a room, your car, a chair, or a short walk. Set a short, realistic time (three to five minutes) and intentionally "close the door," whether that's physical or simply choosing to be fully present. During that time, use this simple prayer structure: *God, here's what's on my mind. Here's what I need. Here's where I want to grow.* This week isn't about performance; it's about showing up personally and relationally. Prayer is where you and God get to connect without an audience, without pressure, and without pretending.