

Jesus' Father in heaven, and why Jesus might have asked us to pray in His name.

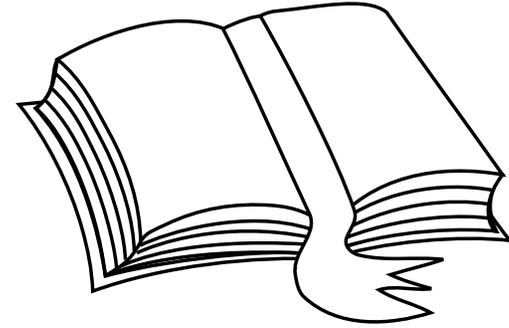
#### SECTION IV.

When some people are told that God has promised to give us anything we ask for, as Jesus does in John 15, they think that it may give people a *blank check* so to speak. The reality is that this statement is true when we are asking for what is within the will of God. We cannot, of course be certain whether something we are asking for is within God's will, but by reading the Bible and trying to understand how God wants us to live, we can have a reasonably good idea whether what we are asking for is likely to be God-pleasing and within God's will.

#### SECTION V.

B-3. Some possible answers: set aside a time and a place to pray together, praying on the telephone, making it a point to personally ask others if we can pray for them or with them. If they say we can pray with them, then immediately pray together. Pray whenever you have a few minutes of extra time in a line, waiting for the stop light, etc. Leaders should encourage others by setting aside time and asking for prayer requests, and asking individuals to pray for a specific person or need. We can also ask others about answers to prayers that they have received. We can encourage one another to keep prayer journals.

### NOTES



### TALKING TO GOD

#### SECTION I. Introduction

- A. Two hundred years ago in your culture, what were the ways people usually communicated?
- B. What are the most important ways to communicate today?
- C. What is your favorite method to communicate with someone you love? Why do you like this way best?

SECTION II. God wants us to communicate with Him. He has told us this. He himself has communicated with us in many ways. He has spoken to us through the prophets; through His Son, Jesus Christ; and through the Bible. In the book of Psalms, we can see how God's people communicated with Him through prayer thousands of years ago. King David, the second king of Israel, wrote these psalms during Old Testament times.

- A. Read Psalm 5:1-3.

- 1. How did David begin his day?

## TALKING TO GOD LEADER'S NOTES

2. In what ways does David show he honors God?
3. What does David ask God to do in verse 1?
4. After David gives God honor and tells God what he needs, what does David say he does?
5. What does this Psalm show us about prayer and how to pray?

B. Read Psalm 55:1-2a. In these verses, what four things does David ask God to do?

C. Read Psalm 145:18.

1. What does this verse show that David believes?
2. What evidence (proof) do you see in your own life or the lives of those around you that this is true today?

D. Read Psalm 6:8-10. David shows that he believes that his prayer has had results. What are the results?

SECTION III. In New Testament times, people continued to communicate with God. Jesus prayed to *His Father in Heaven*. The apostles and Jesus' other disciples also prayed. Jesus gave many examples of praying. Read Luke 6:12-13.

### SECTION I.

The emphasis here is on the idea that communicating or talking is a two way process. One person sends a message and another receives it. In the past, people communicated with body language, speech, and through the written word. In biblical times few people knew how to read and write. That has changed, so that over the years more communication has taken place through writing than in early times. In modern times, we have added many other technically sophisticated means of communicating -- phones, telegraph, telephone, email, fax and text messaging. The basics, however, have not changed. We still send information to another person and expect a response.

### SECTION II.

As noted above, communicating is normally a two-way exchange. To exchange information we need two persons. Some people's understanding of God does not include the idea that God is personal. If their god is not personal, prayer has no meaning -- it is useless nonsense. Before beginning this section it is important to be sure that people understand that Christians believe in a God who is personal. You will also want to explain who the prophets were and what their function was, how Jesus was God's Word to us, and that we believe what the Bible tells us.

Question A-5 in Section II The answers to this question can be quite varied. They might include such ideas as when to pray, the possible contents of prayer (such as *A.C.T.S.*—adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication) and our expectation of an answer from God. There may be other ideas as well.

### SECTION III.

Before beginning this section, you may want to tell people who are not Christians that the Bible teaches that there are three persons in one God. We cannot really explain this idea adequately, but telling them might clarify any question about

retreat                      turn back, withdraw

**Luke 6:12-13**

chose                        select, pick

disciple(s)                people who believe in and follow Jesus

apostles                    men chosen by Christ to preach (teach) the Gospel

**John 16:23b-24.**

guarantee                  to give a promise

**Matthew 21:22**

faith                        belief that does not rely only on logical proof or material evidence

**James 1:5**

wisdom                     understanding of what is true, right, or lasting

generous                  gives easily, shares much

find fault                 to say *you are wrong, you are bad*

**Acts 2:42**

devoted                    dedicated, committed

fellowship                being together with people who share similar (like) experiences

breaking of bread        eating together and sharing Holy Communion

A. Where and how long did Jesus pray?

B. Why do you think Jesus prayed so long at that particular time?

C. What can we learn about prayer from Jesus' example?

SECTION IV. According to the New Testament, Jesus prayed often. He also encouraged His disciples to pray and gave instructions about prayer.

A. Read John 16:23b-24.

1. How does Jesus say His disciples are to ask God the Father for what they need?

2. What does He say the results will be if we ask for something in Jesus' name?

B. Read Matthew 21:22. What should we believe when we pray?

C. Read John 15:7.

1. When Jesus says that we can ask for anything and we will receive it, what is the condition?

2. When we pray, how can we know that we have met the condition that Jesus talks about here?

SECTION V. Jesus taught and modeled that prayer was talking to God and that God would answer our prayers. There are several places in the New Testament where prayer is talked about. The writer James talks about prayer.

A. Read James 1:5.

1. What does James encourage us to do?
2. What does James say the result will be?

B. The disciples also prayed as a group. Read Acts 2:42.

1. What were the things that the disciples did together as a group during the early days of the Christian church?
2. Why do you think prayer was an important part of early Christian life?
3. What are some ways we can encourage each other to pray, both as individuals and in a group?

## TALKING TO GOD VOCABULARY LIST

### Psalm 5:1-3

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| consider  | to think about carefully and seriously |
| innermost | most intimate                          |
| lay       | to place, put                          |

### Psalm 55:1-2a

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| hide  | to keep one's self out of sight                                      |
| plea  | appeal, request  |
| mercy | kind and compassionate treatment of someone by a person in authority |

### Psalm 145:18

|          |       |
|----------|-------|
| faithful | loyal |
|----------|-------|

### Psalm 6:8-10

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| troublemakers | people who cause trouble or do evil   |
| accepts       | receive, hear   |
| shame         | a painful feeling that is a result of guilt, embarrassment, unworthiness or some kind of disgrace |
| shaken        | tremble, moved  |
| terror        | great fear  |