

## **10 Tips on How to Introduce People to Group Prayer by Reid Smith**

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Praying in a group can be intimidating for those who haven't done it before. You'd be surprised how many people are not used to praying out loud with other people around them listening in. This is an important skill for all believers to develop because agreement in prayer among two or more believers makes God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven and builds the community of His Church (Matthew 18:19-20). Here are some tips that will help you to ease people who are unfamiliar with group prayer into this very important spiritual practice:

1. **Be brief.** Brevity can reduce the anxiety level in group prayer because it allows time for others to pray and serves as a model for simplicity in prayer (Matthew 5:7-13). People who aren't use to praying aloud in a group will see short and simple as something they can do too.
2. **Be informal.** Don't have a big build-up. When it's time to pray, just begin. For example, "Okay everyone, let's pray. Feel free to jump in if you'd like. Lord, we..." This makes prayer feel less intimidating and more natural.
3. **Be yourself.** Imagine God sitting across from you in the group and talk with Him like you would a person (after-all God is fully human and He is actually in your midst). Have a conversational flow to what you share with the Lord and avoid Christian clichés or complex theological jargon.
4. **Use Scripture.** Invite people to articulate their prayer with biblical passages. They can read something that is meaningful to them and then say, "I believe that about..." or "Let that be true for..." and reference their own prayer need or one that was shared by another group member.
5. **Invite the most confident to lead.** There is usually at least one person in every group who tends to be more forthright in prayer or they're good about summarizing multiple prayer needs. At the beginning of your next group meeting, ask them how they'd feel about facilitating the prayer time. If they're open to doing this, reassure them by saying, "Just be yourself...you'll be great!"
6. **Don't call on anybody.** Some people are terrified to pray in front of others, and if they're newer to the group, they may not return if you put them on the spot.
7. **Don't go in a circle.** This puts people who don't want to pray aloud in an embarrassing situation, especially if they're the only one to pass.
8. **Go first in sharing a personal prayer request.** This primes the pump for others to share and sets an example of vulnerability.
9. **Appoint somebody to write down prayer requests.** Then follow-up on them at your

next gathering. This cultivates a warm and caring environment that will help people feel safer about personally engaging in group prayer.

10. **Integration.** Discussing prayer needs outside of the time allotted for prayer in your next gathering can help to integrate prayer more into your group-life. This helps group prayer feel more as a natural part of your group-life as opposed to an isolated or add-on component.