

# The Simplest Way to Help Your Members Pray Out Loud

By Mark Howell

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We have all been there. You come to the end of the meeting. You ask, "How can we pray for you this week?" Most of your group members share a prayer request. You say, "Let's pray." And no one else prays. At least, no one else prays *out loud*.

What can you do? How can you help your group members learn to pray *out loud*?

I've written about this before. In fact, [Top 10 Ways to Learn to Pray Together](#) is one of my most popular articles. But last fall when I started a

new group for our [church-wide campaign](#) I slightly tweaked one of [my top 10 ways](#) and it worked so well I want to tell you in a little more detail what I did.

## Here's the Simplest Way to Help Your Members Pray Aloud

It was the end of our second meeting. I said, "Prayer is just talking with God. That's all it is. And if you think about it, we would definitely do some things differently if Jesus was physically here with us tonight. Wouldn't we? If He was sitting right here (I patted the empty chair next to me) we probably wouldn't close our eyes to talk with Him. Right?"

(It was a fun moment. No one knew where this was going.)

I continued, "If Jesus was sitting right here, if He was physically part of our group, we probably wouldn't use any kind of special language...like refer to Him as 'Thee' or 'Thou.' Right?"

(Everyone was nodding. They still didn't know where it was going.)

"Well, the Bible says 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them (Matthew 18:20 NIV).' So really, He is here right now."

"Here's what I want you to do. I want you to imagine that Jesus is sitting right here, right now. And I want you to think of one thing you're thankful for, one thing, not a lot of things. And I want you to keep your eyes open and tell Jesus the one thing. It can't be a long thing. Just one, simple thing."

And my group, all 12 of them (9 from backgrounds where they'd never prayed out loud), went around the circle and said one thing, eyes open, to the empty chair.

Very cool.

## The Next Week

The next week (our 3rd meeting) we came to the end of the meeting and I split the group into four groups and sent them to their own rooms or areas with this assignment. I said, "Imagine that you each have Jesus with you in your little group. I want you to share with Jesus one need that you personally have. Eyes open. Look at a spot in the circle if you need to. Just take a few minutes to do that and then we're done."

## **The Week After That**

The next week I sent them back to their little groups of 3 and said, "This week I want you to imagine that Jesus is with you again. Right in your little circle. I want each of you to share a need that you have with Jesus and your group. After you've done that, I want each of you to pray for the person on your right, eyes open, and just ask Jesus to meet their need."

## **6 Months Later**

Does everyone pray out loud when our meetings end? Not all the time. But many more do. And if we subgroup, it's very common for everyone to pray. Even better? Last week when we ran out of time, I asked everyone to connect with one other group member (from their little group) and share a personal prayer request. As the meeting broke up, I noticed several little prayer meetings going on. Pretty cool...I have to say.