

## *Leader's Guide*

### ***Prayer & Petition***

These leader's guides are designed to help stimulate our thinking in terms of how we can get the most out of the material and help others to fish out insights that perhaps are not so apparent to them. These documents are living papers and will be updated regularly.

We will list the section and page number from *The Ezra 7<sup>10</sup> Plan Book 1– First Love: A Heart to Understand* for easy referencing.

#### ***Intimate: Purposes of Prayer***

Pages 56 – 65

- ❶ While it is important to make sure that we confess our sins before God, why is it also important to share all of our thoughts and emotions as well?
- ❷ There are many benefits to confessing our sins to God besides just making us feel better. Ask the group to name as many as they can.
- ❸ Discuss why God deserves our praise, but also how we benefit in the process of worshipping God.
- ❹ While 1 Thessalonians 5:18 states to give thanks in everything, what do we think this means? What does it not mean?
- ❺ What may be the underlying attitudes or root causes that lead a person to become unthankful or ungrateful.

***Intimate: Purposes of Prayer continued***

Pages 56 – 65

⑥ For some of us as new Christians, it may take a little time while we discern how God will meet our needs. The Israelites coming out of Egypt had to leave their old life and ways behind as they learned or re-learned that God is their true provider. Can we relate to some of the struggles they experienced in transferring their previous experiences and trust in the world to placing all their faith in God?

⑦ Ask the group to answer the questions in the book in their own words:

- *How do we develop an ever-deepening relationship with God through petition and avoid the temptation to credit other things for what are really God's actions?*
- *How do we stand firm in faith instead of fear and patiently wait for God's provision?*
- *How do we recognize God's fingerprints on the gifts He gives us so freely?*

***Inhibit: Pitfalls to Prayer***

Pages 66 – 74

① Discuss any insights gained from reviewing the Unrepentant's downward spiral table on page 68. Ask the group if there is anything they could do to help others climb out of the downward spiral.

② Discuss any insights gained from reviewing the Repentant's upward spiral table on page 69. In the *What is happening* column the focus of our life gradually changes from ourselves to whom? How does that changed focus help us mature spiritually and develop a deep conviction for avoiding behavior that falls below God's standards?

③ Discuss the list of ways we can be focused while we pray on page 71. Ask the group if they struggle with any one in particular and how we can better exercise sound judgment in prayer.

④ Discuss how emotions and doubts can negatively affect our prayer life. What are some good countermeasures that will help us become controlled by the Holy Spirit while we pray?

## ***Infinite: Possibilities in Prayer***

Pages 75 – 83

❶ While the Lord's Prayer (which is not actually a prayer but an outline) is perhaps one of the best known passages in the Bible, often repeated in churches worldwide, yet the purpose and meaning of the passage may be unknown. How is that possible? How can we make the recitation of the Lord's Prayer meaningful to us?

❷ Review the more rigorous translation of the Lord's Prayer on page 76. Does this provide any additional insights?

❸ Review the broad categories of prayer listed on page 77. What does that list tell us about what should be important to us? How do we reflect those priorities in our lives?

❹ Just for fun, pick a prayer found in the Bible and place its verses in one or more of the Lord's Prayer categories as listed on page 77.

❺ Discuss the last three sentences on page 80 (which follow below). Which of the Lord's Prayer categories do we seem to forget to pray about?

“Everything in the *Lord's Prayer* should be included in our prayer time on a regular basis. We cannot just pick and choose to complete the objectives that may be easy for us. We will mature in our prayers and in our prayer time only when we pray through all of the *Lord's Prayer* objectives.”

❻ Ask the group if they can think of an example where praying too specifically about something may divert our spiritual eyes from seeing how God is answering our needs.

❼ James 5:16b is a great verse to discuss. We have provided some additional insight by looking into the original Greek and adding some additional translations in parentheses (see below). Based on this additional information please discuss any new insights.

James 5:16b ... *The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*

*The (operating, able, capable, powerful, strong) effective (petition) prayer of a righteous (person) man (is at work) (brings about) can accomplish (many, mighty, great things) much.*

***Infinite: Possibilities in Prayer*** continued

Pages 75 – 83

③ A good Bible study technique to find key words is to look at the basic sentence structure of a verse and then add the missing words back in one at a time. We have done this for James 5:16. Discuss any insights this adds.

- *Prayer can accomplish.*
- *The prayer of a righteous man can accomplish.*
- *The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*

***In to it: Plans for Prayer***

Pages 84 – 89

① While we can pray any where and any time, why is it also important to have set times and places for prayer?

② While free flowing prayer without structure under the guide of the Holy Spirit has examples in Scripture, why is it also important to provide structure to our prayer time?

③ Just for fun, we can come-up with an acronym similar to the ones on pages 85 and 86 that captures the categories of the Lord's Prayer; and share it with the group.

④ Discuss the pros (and maybe a few cons) about keeping a prayer list.

⑤ Discuss John 17:9 and why it is important to pray for the people God asks us to pray for and not just for everyone we know. John 17:9 *I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;*

⑥ Ask the group if they attend a church-wide prayer meeting and if so, discuss the benefits of group prayer.

***Inform it: Passing on Prayer***

Pages 90 – 94

① Ask the group who their favorite prayer warriors are and why.

***Inform it: Passing on Prayer continued***

Pages 90 – 94

② Sharing answers to prayer is beneficial in many ways. Ask the group to discuss these benefits.

③ Ask the group if they have had to explain to another how to pray. What are some ways to easily explain how to get started in a well-planned, structured prayer time that is exciting and powerful?

④ What are some other ways to pray that will motivate people to pray more? Discuss activities such as praying scriptures or praying or singing Christian songs, spending a half-day in prayer, saying grace over a meal, etc.