

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER: Lesson Plan

Posted by Bob Young

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

- The Bible teaches us to pray.
- Our experience with prayer ranges from silent to boisterous, from spontaneous to liturgical. Prayer should be both private and corporate (public). Either without the other is like day without night. They complement each other.
- Much public prayer, especially spontaneous public prayer, sets a poor example for new believers, using stilted language, a “holy voice”, and vague requests.
- Obviously Conversational Prayer is not the only way to pray. It is presented here because it is the experience of several national MCFs and other groups is that using conversational prayer produces an increased consciousness of God's presence, resulting in greater group vitality and unity. It is also very helpful in teaching people how to pray.
- Most of these principles are applicable to individual prayer as well as small group prayer.

OBJECTIVE: By the end of this presentation, each of you should be able to do the following:

- A. Define conversational prayer in your own words.
- B. State the Four Basic Guidelines.
- C. State the duties of the leader.

PRESENTATION (10 minutes)

A. Definition. Conversational Prayer is:

1. Talking with (not just to) God (the entire Trinity). (Matthew 18:19-20)
2. Talking as a small group, 3-6 is optimum, often an Inductive Bible Study group.
3. Talking in an informal, conversational style using normal conversational patterns, tone of voice, and vocabulary. Say “I” when you mean yourself, “we” when you mean the group.

B. Basic Guidelines (these are not rigid rules)

1. Stick to the subject. Pray back and forth on a SINGLE subject, one person or situation at a time, in agreement (Matthew 18-19- 20) until the subject is completed. Participants introduce new subjects as the Holy Spirit prompts. Pray “faith sized”, or believable, requests.
2. Everybody who desires to participates, but no one is forced to participate.
3. No one monopolizes. Keep prayers brief, just a sentence or short paragraph. Pray as often as you like, but give AT LEAST one other person a turn before praying again. Silences are OK.
4. Be aware and respond in three areas:
 - a. Aware of God who is present with us.
 - Adoration: who He IS.
 - Thanksgiving: what He DOES.
 - Attention: what He SAYS.
 - b. Aware of Ourselves in God's presence.
 - Confession: what I have DONE or FAILED TO DO.
 - Petition: what I NEED.
 - c. Aware of others from God's point of view.
 - Intercession: What THEY need.

C. Duties of the Leader.

1. Prepare for the prayer time. This is primarily administrative. Find an informal, undisturbed setting. Set a time. Invite participants. Collect prayer requests as appropriate, etc.
2. Start and stop on time.
3. Enforce the Guidelines as necessary

NOTE: The leader is only a facilitator.

SUMMARY (5 minutes)

A. CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER produces an increased consciousness of God's presence, resulting in greater vitality and unity in a Military Christian Fellowship. It is also very helpful in teaching people how to pray.

B. DEFINITION. Conversational prayer is talking with God as a small group in an informal, conversational style.

C. The BASIC GUIDELINES are:

1. Stick to the subject.
2. Everyone participates.
3. No one monopolizes
4. Be aware and respond in three areas:
 - a. God: adoration, thanksgiving, attention.
 - b. Ourselves: confession, petition.
 - c. Others: intercession.

D. The duties of the LEADER are:

1. Prepare for the prayer time.
2. Start and stop on time.
3. Enforce the Basic Guidelines.

INSTRUCTIONS: This Lesson Plan is for a period of 20 minutes, and is intended to be followed by a time of conversational prayer in small groups. It can be modified as desired. The undefined parts are the answers for the blanks on the worksheet.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER : Work Sheet

INTRODUCTION

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER produces an increased consciousness of God's presence, resulting in greater vitality and unity. It is also very helpful in teaching people how to pray. Most of the principles are applicable to individual prayer as well as small group prayer.

OBJECTIVE: By the end of this presentation, each of you should be able to do the following:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

PRESENTATION

A. Definition: Conversational Prayer is:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

B. Basic Guidelines

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

C. Duties of the Leader

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

NOTE: The leader is only a facilitator.

SUMMARY

A. Conversational prayer produces an increased consciousness of God's presence, resulting in greater vitality and unity in a Military Christian Fellowship. It is also very helpful in teaching people how to pray. Most of the principles are applicable to individual prayer as well as small group prayer.

B. Conversational Prayer is talking with God in a small group in an informal, conversational style.

C. The Basic Guidelines are:

- 1. Stick to the subject.
- 2. Everyone participates.
- 3. No one monopolizes.
- 4. Be aware and respond in three areas:
 - a. God – adoration, thanksgiving, attention
 - b. Ourselves – confession, petition.
 - c. Others – intercession.

D. The leader prepares for prayer time, starts and stops on time, and enforces the basic guidelines.

APPENDIX A

Conversational Prayer, by Katherine Kehler

“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20)

Having been the Director of the Canadian Prayer Alert for nineteen years and having worked with many churches and prayer organizations, I have made some interesting observations. It seems that most denominations and Christian organizations have developed their own prayer culture - one in which they feel comfortable praying.

Sometimes we become so familiar with how we pray that we become insensitive to new members in the group who may never have prayed aloud before. Or maybe you yourself don't feel comfortable praying aloud in prayer groups.

Do you avoid praying aloud in public or in prayer groups? Have you been part of a prayer group where one person dominated the prayer time and didn't let anyone else pray? You wanted to pray aloud but because you didn't want to be rude, you ended up praying silently?

Have you been in a prayer group where someone used the time to pray/preach to someone in the group? Have you wanted to pray aloud, but didn't think your prayers were acceptable to the group because you are a new Christian?

I suppose we have all experienced one or more of these scenarios. Remember that the purpose of your prayer time is to communicate with God. It should never be viewed as a ritual or as a time to “preach” to one another.

Conversational prayer is a group of people who talk to God in the same way they talk to a friend. Members use everyday conversational language. If you are the leader of the group, encourage all the people in the group (especially a group unfamiliar with group prayer) to feel free to pray sentence prayers, expressing only a brief thought in one or two sentences.

Here are some ways to pray conversationally:

Leader Introduce Topics

Introduce a prayer topic or request, one at a time. The group will then pray about this topic or request. Then the leader will introduce another topic or request.

Shared Prayer Requests

Allow the group to share prayer requests. As a prayer request is offered you could ask another member to be responsible to pray for that request during the prayer time. This ensures that each person's request will be prayed for by at least one other person.

Pray Through Scripture

This method allows the group to use one or more passages of Scripture as a prayer guide. You can choose any passage that you feel will be appropriate. Here are some examples:

Choose a Psalm of praise such as Psalm 103, Psalm 145 or Psalm 150.

Pray for Workers

Recognize the problem of the labor shortage in the spiritual harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38; Romans 10:13-15)

Use Hymns

Sing a hymn prayerfully and then use the words of the hymn to guide the prayer time.

Use the Attributes of God

Select one or more attributes of God and spend the time meditating on those attributes and praising Him for His attributes. Share answers to prayer and spend the time thanking God for the answers and His faithfulness.

APPENDIX B
“Conversational Prayer: Seven Reminders”

Acknowledge God’s presence in the group. Praise and adoration is always good to help focus the group on communicating with the Lord.

Pray short prayers of one, two or three sentences.

Pray about one subject, idea or person at a time until everyone has shared as much and as often as desired.

Be reluctant to change the subject as you would in any conversation until everyone is finished with it.

Times of silence can give the timid and the thoughtful time to contribute.

The more the conversation with God is passed around the group the deeper the intimacy grows. In time a small group becomes totally unified and purely transparent.

Watch God’s love flow freely, lives transform and answers to prayer abound.