

Cures for Humdrum Prayer Times

Behind most people's frustration with group prayer is a lack of variety. Week after week, it's the same. "Let's go around the room and share requests.... Okay, let's pray now." And back around the room you go again. Resolve not to use the same prayer method twice in a row, then try the following ideas to bring freshness to group prayer:

- After one person shares her requests, ask the person on her right to pray briefly for her. Move through the group this way. After everyone's requests have been brought before the Lord, close with five or ten minutes of sentence prayers that focus on praise and worship.
- Devote all but the last five minutes of your prayer time to praise, thanksgiving, and talking to God about the Bible study you just did. During the last five minutes, let group members pair up, share a prayer request, and briefly pray for each other.
- Share answers to prayer. Whenever answers come, stop right then and give God thanks. Answered prayer and verbalized gratefulness bring energy and enthusiasm to our prayer lives.
- Vary your prayer posture. Kneel, stand in a circle and hold hands, raise hands in praise, and so on.
- Let music enhance your times of worship. There are many worship choruses that can "get you in the mood" for expressing adoration and praise. One group leader used music to lead her group through several prayer transitions. One worship song led the group into adoration, another set the stage



for several minutes of silent confession, another led into thanksgiving, and a fourth chorus prepared the group for bringing their requests before God.

- Schedule extended times for prayer. Meet for bagels and coffee on a Saturday morning, then spend an hour or two in group prayer. If your busy schedules make it difficult to get together outside of your regular meeting time, devote every fourth (or sixth) meeting to prayer.
- Keep a prayer file with ideas for varying group prayer.
- Set guidelines for sharing requests. You may need to limit each person to two minutes. Some groups limit prayer requests to those involving group members or their immediate family. Another excellent guideline is to prohibit problem-solving.