



groupware

When God's People Pray



Jim Cymbala

bestselling author of ***Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire***

with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson

Small Group
Edition

Participant's Guide



Session One

God's Heart for Us

At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.

GENESIS 4:26, TNIV

INTRODUCTION (6 MINUTES)

DVD Introduction by Jim Cymbala

Question to Think About

What do you think Christians and the churches they attend miss out on when calling on God in prayer is not an essential part of their life and worship?

**DVD TEACHING SEGMENT (9 MINUTES)****Notes**

God is rich in mercy to all who call on him

Prayer: the evidence of true faith

God answers prayer

Life's problems remind us to call on God

No place to go but God



GROUP EXPLORATION (18 MINUTES)

Discussion

1. What were your thoughts as Jim explained how people who really believe in God instinctively call on him in petition and praise?

"The essence of all religion is people not only trusting God, but trusting him enough to call on his name in prayer so that they actually experience his gracious provision in their lives."

From the video

2. To what degree do you think people in our culture (ourselves included) are aware of this instinct?
 3. Jim says that God is a prayer-answering God who is rich in mercy to everyone who calls on him. When God responds to our prayers with mercy, what impact does it have on us, and what does it reveal to us about God?

4. As Christians, we believe that God already knows our needs, so what do you think might be his purpose in waiting for us to ask him to meet our needs before he takes action on our behalf?

Bible Discovery

1. What does Scripture say God will do when people turn to him in faith and wholeheartedly call on his name in prayer? (See Proverbs 15:29; Jeremiah 33:2–3; Matthew 7:7–8; Luke 18:7–8.)

“The Lord cherishes his people, and out of that love flows his desire to bless them. It is through these unmistakable blessings that others can witness God’s goodness and declare, ‘Look what the Lord has done!’ ”

Breakthrough Prayer,
p. 19



2. Scripture reveals valuable insight into God's character and commitment in relationship to his people.
 - a. What is it about God that leads him to respond to those who cry out to him? (See Psalm 86:5–7; Psalm 89:8; Ephesians 2:4–5.)
 - b. What response does God's faithfulness in answering prayer inspire in the hearts of his people? (See Deuteronomy 4:7; Psalm 4:3; Psalm 9:9–10.)

**DVD PRAYER STORY** (14 MINUTES)

“The blessing of God is something very real and tangible. It can change a man’s life, transform a neighborhood, invigorate a church, and even alter the course of history.”

Breakthrough Prayer,
pp. 9–10

Group Discussion

1. When Wanda first prayed with Danny out loud, in public, what do you think began to happen in his life? Why do you think he continued to allow her to pray for him?



2. No matter how far away from God Danny ran, he could not forget Wanda's simple promise: "The day you call on the name of the Lord, he is going to set you free." Would you have expected such a simple, basic message to make such a great difference in Danny's life? Why or why not?
 3. Why was it important for Wanda to have a whole team of people praying for Danny? What impact do you think seeing the fruit of their prayers in Danny's changed life had on those faithful believers?

WRAP-UP (13 MINUTES)

Closing DVD Comments from Jim Cymbala



Personal Reflection

God has chosen prayer as his channel of blessing and is waiting to answer us and supply our needs. He uses our everyday troubles to remind us that we need him to intervene in our lives and that we need to take prayer seriously and call on him passionately.

Think for several minutes about the difference the promise of 1 John 5:14–15 makes in your life: “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”

Now consider how you are approaching God as you face the challenges of your life:

- To what extent are you drawn to God, eagerly praying and anticipating his blessing?

- To what extent do you try to face challenges on your own, without God's help? What is the result?

- To what extent are you confident that God will keep his promises and meet your needs when you call on him?



Group Prayer

Briefly share a few needs and seemingly insurmountable problems you face. Then begin praying together. Praise God for who he is and what he has revealed to you during this session. Trust him enough to call on his name and ask him for help. Let today be the day you arise and talk to the Father from your hearts. Let this be the day you experience a breakthrough moment in which you receive help through the loving power of your prayer-answering God.

"Does Almighty God really need our help? Of course not. But when the Lord's method for accomplishing his purpose includes you and me, then it is both a wonderful privilege and a sacred responsibility for us to respond with faith . . . [and witness] the awesome power of a prayer-answering God."

Breakthrough Prayer, p. 47

PERSONAL JOURNEY: TO DO ON YOUR OWN

God loves you deeply and longs to be in relationship with you. His blessings are tangible and life-changing, and he makes those

"God is deeply concerned when his children are burdened by anxiety, in much the way parents are concerned about their children. It is tragic that we often worry ourselves to death when God's supernatural peace is only a prayer away."

Breakthrough Prayer, p. 153

blessings available to everyone who calls on him. You can bank on the promise of Philippians 4:6–7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."



Bible Discovery

The Bible is full of examples of God's people who have gone before you and held nothing back when they asked God for help. A few of these examples are listed in the following chart. As you read about the needs and experiences of these people, consider what an awesome privilege it is to come to God's throne of grace. Write down how God answered these needy people who called on him from their hearts' deepest desires. Then think about your need to call out to God for help: write it down and start praying.

Bible Passage	Need(s) Expressed	God's Response	My Need for ...
Exodus 15:22–27			Physical provision:
1 Samuel 1:1–11, 19–20, 27–28			Hope in personal suffering:
1 Kings 8:22–30; 9:1–3			God's presence:
1 Chronicles 4:10			God's blessing:



Session One: God's Heart for Us

19

Bible Passage	Need(s) Expressed	God's Response	My Need for ...
Ezra 8:21–23, 31–32			Safety:
Psalm 5:1–3, 12; 34:4–10			Everyday help and deliverance:
Acts 12:5–17			Rescue from evil intent:

Starting today, call on God with your whole heart! Tell him your needs, desires, hopes, and dreams. Pour out your heart before him and invite him into your life situation.



My Personal Prayer Journal

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray.

JAMES 5:13

Use the following pages to write down your prayer requests, praises, thoughts about God and prayer, and so on. You might, for example, thank God in writing for the opportunity you have to call on his name, knowing that he is listening and will act in love on your behalf. You might jot down specific requests and what you would like to see God do in a particular situation. You might list some things that cause you to drift away from the practice of prayer and the things that draw you toward God in prayer. When fears, needs, and unmet desires surface in the days and weeks ahead, and you need God's help to stay on track, write them down.

Most important, get in the habit of prayer. Continue to pray, calling on the name of the Lord regularly. May this record of your prayer journey be a reminder of where you have been and an encouragement for what God will do as you continue to call on his name!



Session One: God's Heart for Us

21

My Personal Prayer Journal

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

JAMES 1:5. TNIV

