

'Hear Our Prayer'
Lent Course 2025 Session 5
Daniel – Constant Prayer

LEADER'S NOTES

Gathering (5 minutes)

Welcome members to the group and ensure they all know each other.

Ask group members if they have had any thoughts or reflections on last week's session.

Opening Prayer

You may like to pray by name for every member of the group.

Then lead this or another prayer:

Lord Jesus as you taught your disciples,
so teach us to pray.
Give us honesty in our confession,
ambition in our intercession,
eloquence in our praise and
humility in our thanksgiving.
Help us to trust in the power of prayer,
and as we pray,
give us renewed joy in the hope of your salvation.
For you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit
one God for ever and ever.
Amen.

Introduction

Use these or other words:

Welcome to the final session of our Lent Course, 'Hear our Prayer' and thank you for staying with it all the way through to the end! The aim of the Course is to deepen our lives of prayer in the company of some characters from the Old Testament.

For our final session we are going to keep the company of that great prophet Daniel. Even in danger and under persecution, he kept praying and adhered to the practices and disciplines of his faith, and that was what saw him through. So this week we will think about the need for constant prayer. We will conclude with an exercise in which you are invited to set your own Rhythm of Prayer for the future.

Biblical Reflection (15 minutes)

Give some background

The enemies of Daniel have persuaded King Darius to make a new law demanding that the only person to whom one should pray is the King. Anyone who prays to another god will be thrown to the lions. Daniel 6:10-22

Read the passage slowly and clearly.

¹⁰ Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open towards Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously. ¹¹ The conspirators came and found Daniel praying and seeking mercy before his God. ¹² Then they approached the king and said concerning the interdict, 'O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human, within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions?' The king answered, 'The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.' ¹³ Then they responded to the king, 'Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day.'

¹⁶ Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. ¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. ²⁰ When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, 'O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?' ²¹ Daniel then said to the king, 'O king, live for ever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong.'

Leave a time of silence.

Ask the following or similar questions:

- Why do you think Daniel kept on praying even when he knew it would lead to his execution?
- What impact does Daniel's constancy in prayer have on the King Darius?
- What does Daniel's story teach us about prayer?

Talk (15 minutes)

Watch the Video. It can be seen on the Blackburn Diocesan Website or on the Fruitful app.

Discussion (15 minutes)

Lead a time of conversation. The following questions will help but feel free to choose just a few of them or ask your own. Please note the discussion is shorter this time to allow people to make a Rhythm of Prayer.

- How 'constantly' do you pray? Is your praying ad hoc or do you have a routine or pattern?
- What things stop you from praying constantly?
- When you have endured hard or challenging times in your life, how easy have you found it to pray? Feel free to share some stories.
- After teaching about the need to pray constantly in Luke 18, Jesus asks, 'When the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?' What does Jesus mean by asking that question?
- What steps do you need to take to be more persistent and disciplined in your life of prayer.

Setting a Rhythm of Prayer (20 minutes)

As the course comes to an end, this exercise will help participants to draw up their own Rhythm of Rule of Prayer. Either you can print off this page and hand each person a copy to fill in. Or it may be simpler to read out the questions and ask people to make their own notes in a book.

Go through the questions one at a time, asking people to comment on each.

A Rhythm of Prayer

Name:

Date:

Date for Review:

COMMUNAL PRAYER

My rhythm for praying with others as part of the Church will be:

Include here weekly public worship and any other ways you will pray communally, for example in a prayer group or family.

PERSONAL PRAYER

My daily routine for prayer will be:

Include here the times and places when you will pray each day.

The content of my prayer will be:

Include here the format of prayer you will use, for example praying the Office, praying with scripture using an App or using your own shape of prayer. See below for some ideas.

TYPES OF PRAYER

Write here how you will incorporate in your prayer life the following types of prayer:

THANKSGIVING (Expressing thanks to God)

CONFESSION (Naming sin before God)

INTERCESSION (Asking God)

SILENCE (Listening to God)

OTHER

Include here anything else you want to put into your Rhythm of Prayer which has not been included above.

RESOURCES

The following online resources and apps may help you to pray constantly as part of your Rhythm of Prayer:

Fruitful: The Diocese of Blackburn Discipleship app

Daily Prayer: The Church of England's Daily Office

Lectio 365: Prayers and reflection for every day from the 24/7 prayer movement
Everyday Faith: The Church of England's app to support discipleship
Time to Pray: Daily order for Prayer during the Day and Compline
Pray as you Go: Daily prayers in the Ignatian tradition
Universalis: The daily office and lectionary from the Catholic church

Prayer (10 minutes)

We will close the Lent Course by prayer for each other.

Turn to the person sitting next to you and chat:

- Make sure you know their name
- Is there anything or anyone on their heart that they would like you to pray for?
- Is there any area in which they particularly need help from God as they go on growing in prayer?

Then go round the group, inviting each person to pray aloud for a while for their neighbour.

A Commitment to Constant Prayer (5 minutes)

The person who has led the group should lead this:

St Paul writes: "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints." (*Ephesians 6, 18*)

So I invite you now to dedicate yourself to constant prayer. Please make the response: With the help of God I will.

Will you dedicate yourself anew to seeking the Lord in prayer, so that you can be a witness to the hope of the Resurrection?

With the help of God I will.

Will you be constant and disciplined in prayer and especially keep praying when times are hard?

With the help of God I will.

Will you seek deeper relationship with the Lord in prayer so that your life can be patterned on His?

With the help of God I will.

Will you pray with joy and with ambition, asking the Lord that you might receive?

With the help of God I will.

Will you pray with and for your fellow Christians and so find your place within the body of Christ?

With the help of God I will.

Will you keep praying right until that day when you gaze upon God face to face in the place where all is lost in wonder, love and praise?

With the help of God I will.

May God who has begun this work in your bring it to completion on the day of Jesus Christ.

Amen

Our Father...

God of Mission

who alone brings growth to your Church,

send your Holy Spirit to give

vision to our planning,

wisdom to our actions,

joy to our worship,

and power to our witness.

Help our church to grow in numbers,

in spiritual commitment to you,

and in service to our local community,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the Lord bless us

and keep us from all evil

and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.