



# Summer of Prayer

## How to Improve Your Prayer Life Week 1

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website ([www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk](http://www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk)). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.

### Why Pray When You Can WORRY!



#### Read James 5:13-16

This week we begin our new summer series on prayer. God is calling his Church to pray in these days like never before. Prayer is absolutely vital; it is in fact the Christian's vital breath. Why then do so many of us struggle with prayer? If it is so important why don't more of us do it more often? Perhaps because it is so important! But why pray when we can worry? Worry is described as 'interest paid on trouble before it is due'. James writes to encourage a disturbed, insecure, fearful people who are 'in trouble' to pray. Trouble is all around us - in our lives, in the lives of those we love, in our community, in our country, in our world. As Christians, why worry when we can pray!

#### Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. Why pray when you can worry? 'Worry is like rocking chair it gives you something to do but doesn't get you anywhere?' Do you spend a lot of time and energy worrying? What do you worry about? Would you like to worry less?
2. James exhorts his readers that rather than worrying about troubles, they are to pray. The Apostle Paul says the same to the Christians in Philippi (see Philippians 4:6), essentially, why worry when you can pray? Do you think that prayer is important? Does it matter if we do not pray?
3. Are you happy with your prayer life? Or do you struggle with prayer? If so, why is that?
4. Can our prayers affect God's plans which are established from eternity? Does God change his mind? (see Jonah 3; Genesis 18:16-33). Can you think of other examples in Scripture or in history where God has changed his plans in answer to the prayers of his people?
5. Do you think that God hears your prayers? Or do you feel that your prayers are lacking in some way? Are there special conditions that you think you need to meet in order to have your prayers answered? Have you ever experienced disappointment or disillusionment with prayer when things have not happened in the way you prayed? Has this affected your prayer life?
6. James states that in order for prayer to be effective we need to be living in right relationship with God and with other people (verses 15 & 16). Can our spiritual condition affect the efficacy of our prayers? Should we be confessing our sin to each other and get things out in the open so they can be dealt with and forgiveness received? Might our prayers then be more powerful? Read Daniel 9:1-19.
7. My prayer is that throughout this series we will all be motivated and inspired to pray, we will learn and experience more about prayer and our prayer lives **will** be improved. Jesus is the best example of the person who prayed - see Luke 3:21; 5:15,16; 6:12,13; 9:18-20, 28,29; 11:1-4 etc. The New Testament Church experienced the power of God among them as they prayed - see Acts 2:1-4; 4:23-31; 12:1-18; Acts 16:25-31. Please read these Scriptures and be inspired!