

January 18, 2026

## Begin With Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

*Warmup: If loving your neighbor were an Olympic sport, which event would you medal in, and which event would you absolutely fail?*

**READ & REFLECT** Matthew 6:9-13, Matthew 22:37-39

**ADDITIONAL READING:** Chapter 3 of the BLESS Book

- What stands out to you the most about the way Jesus prayed?
- What main reasons does the book give for making space for consistent prayer? (pages 35-37)

Share your thoughts about the next two questions with the person next to you.

- What do you find most challenging about prayer?
- When have you found prayer to be the most helpful?

**LIFE GROUP LEADER:** Recount two of the BLESS stories from chapter 3 or have a few in your group share how God opened doors this week for an opportunity to bless a neighbor.

- Why does love begin with prayer?

### GOING DEEPER

- When a meeting gets canceled or you suddenly have free time, what do you usually do with that space?
  - How might your day shift if you paused and asked God how He wants you to use that time?
- Take 2 minutes to respond to the quote: "Following Jesus isn't meant to be comfortable; it's meant to be life changing."  
*My immediate thoughts are:*
- Pastor Neil mentioned that Jesus' prayer has a chiastic structure. Why does that matter? In other words, which phrase sits at the center of the prayer and carries the main emphasis?
- How could praying this central theme of Jesus' prayer reshape the way we intercede for the people around us?

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*"To transform religious and irreligious people into Fully Devoted Followers of Christ."*

## RESPONSE

- Begin praying each day for opportunities to BLESS your neighbors. How could these prayers shape your expectations of what God can do, and how can this impact your faith?
- Make a list of the neighbors that surround you, identifying at least eight people in the households in your neighborhood.
- Spend time in prayer asking Jesus what your next steps are to bless your neighbors.
  - As the BLESS book suggests, envision the faces of the neighbors as you pray.
  - Prayer suggestions: pray for your neighbor's physical health, their relationships, their emotional well-being, their careers and their finances. Think about how you would want someone to pray for you.
- How will your Life Group encourage one another in praying for your neighbors this week?

*1 John 5:14-15*

*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.*

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