

# Closing a Group Meeting in Prayer

By **Mark Howell** - December 18, 2017



## Q: “What is the best way to close a group meeting in prayer?”

A: Great question! There are several parts to my answer. First, the entire meeting structure ought to vary according to the needs of the group’s members. After all, new groups will be much less willing to share genuine needs. Long-term groups may spend a much longer portion of their group time praying.

Second, if the intensity of a meeting ought to change over time, it makes sense that the way your group prays together ought to change over time. The closing prayer at the very first meeting might be more of a blessing than anything else. As the group begins to get to know each other, you may find that what used to take five minutes now takes 30. You may also find that, without some intentionality, the authenticity of your members’ prayer requests are stuck at a fairly superficial level. This is the point when it will benefit everyone to take advantage of the idea of a spiritual partner.

Third, if the only person who can close is the official leader, you’re missing a great opportunity. As early as possible, you’ll want to begin to help your members learn how to pray together. If the greatest fear that people have is public speaking, it only makes sense that many people will be hesitant to pray out loud. Here are some ideas that I’ve found very helpful:

- Distribute index cards and pens and ask each person to write out a simple one sentence prayer request. Swap cards and read them aloud.
- Ask each person to fill in the blank and say one thing they're thankful for: "God, I'm thankful for my \_\_\_\_\_."
- Pull a chair into the middle of the room and suggest that since Jesus said, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them (Matthew 18:20)," in tonight's meeting let's speak to him as if he was right in that chair.
- Sentence prayers with no conjunctions (and). One idea only. For example, "God help me with \_\_\_\_\_." "God I'm thankful for \_\_\_\_\_." "God be with Dean tonight in a way he can sense."
- Try a ground rule: You can only pray for a personal concern tonight. Nothing for your sister's husband's co-worker's daughter.
- Ask your members to pair up or get in groups of three to pray together.



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