

# Prayer for Beginners by Peter Kreeft Discussion Guide

We all want to pray, but sometimes we need others to help us in this journey. We need accountability. Having a small group or a prayer partner will help you with this. The size of a small group can vary from 2 – 8 people. Small groups can meet in homes or in a reserved room in the church. Meeting times could include sharing a meal. How often groups meet can be determined by each group but allowing enough time to read, reflect, and implement. Below is a recommended schedule for meeting monthly.

## *Month 1*

*Read Chapters 1 – 4 and meet to discuss*

## *Month 2*

*Read Chapters 5-8 and meet to discuss*

## *Month 3*

*Read Chapter 9 and meet to discuss*

## *Month 4*

*Read Chapters 10 – 14 and meet to discuss*

## *Month 5*

*Read Chapters 15 – 18 and meet to discuss*

## **Chapter 1 – Necessity: Why is Praying More Important than Eating**

Explain how Peter Kreeft’s comparison between eating and praying struck you.

What might get in the way of doing the two things?

## **Chapter 2 – Motives: Ten Compelling Reasons to Pray**

Which of the ten compelling reasons to pray stood out to you?

Did any of the ten reasons cause concern for you?

*Pause here to take time to talk to God about the reasons that stood out or concerned you.*

*What will you do this week in your prayer time as a result of the “talk”(which is prayer) with God?*

*Write it down here:*

## **Chapter 3 – Methods Why We Need None**

Do you understand that learning to pray is not a method? How would you explain this to someone who is struggling to begin praying?

## **Chapter 4 – Vocal Prayer as Conversation with God**

How does vocal prayer become more than “saying your prayers”?

How does Kreeft using the examples of human relationships help you understand this?

Are you ready to put this into practice?

## **Chapter 5 – Steps: Stop, Look, and Listen**

Did you Stop, Look, and Listen? Was it hard? What did you notice? Talk about this with God and also your group or prayer partner.

## **Chapter 6 – Thoughts: Where the Action Is**

*Persevere here – read, reread, stop, and reflect.*

What might be getting in the way of aligning your mind and will?

Do you see the connection? Ask God to help you with any obstacles. Talk to your group or prayer partner.

## **Chapter 7 – Faith: The One Prerequisite for Prayer**

What is faith?

What are the things we sometimes rely on to practice the presence of God? Name them and why do they fail?

Do you see what a gift faith is? How do we grow in faith?

## **Chapter 8 – Themes: What Should I Say When I Pray?**

*Let's remember that when we pray, we practice the presence of God.*

Do you see how RAPT helps you practice the presence of God?

STOP – Which of these are new to you? Which are easy? Which are challenging? Ask God to help you be “wrapped” in prayer.

## **Chapter 9 – “Jesus”: The Shortest, Simplest, and Most Powerful Prayer in the World**

The shortest prayer is the longest chapter in the book. Slow down, take time with this. We cannot be in relationship with someone unless we know their name and call them by name.

Why is the Jesus prayer so powerful?

**Spend time reflecting on all the What It is and What it is not sections.**

Talk with your group or prayer partner about what you are now aware of and what you notice when you pray Jesus' name.

## **Chapter 10 – Work: Prayer Always**

How do we make our works prayer?

## **Chapter 11 – Distractions: Mental Obstacles to Prayer**

What a relief! Share with others your reaction to distractions.

## **Chapter 12 – Sins: Moral Obstacles to Prayer**

How is sin getting in the way of your prayer life?

*Make a commitment to go to confession.*

### **Chapter 13 – Simplicity: Prayer as Saint- Making**

*Don't stop now- keep persevering ... we need to tame our wills to become our true selves (saints).*

Why does prayer exist? Did this surprise you?

### **Chapter 14 – Renunciation: The Necessity of the Negative**

How did exploring the negative side of sanctity help you?

### **Chapter 15 – Sufferings: How to Transform Bitterness into Sweetness**

How do you understand suffering differently after reading this chapter?

### **Chapter 16 – Patience: Forgiving Ourselves for Failure**

How does Brother Lawrence's advice on how to deal with failure help you?

Why should we not see this as too easy? What are the two dangers here?

### **Chapter 17 – Grace: What Everything Is**

How is grace needed for prayer and holiness?

## **Chapter 18 – Perseverance: The Realistic Fanaticism**

Do you want to become a saint? Do you have any of the three fears that modern culture puts up to deter you from perseverance?

**Make a plan to stay connected to your  
small group**

**May your prayer life and relationship  
with God continue to grow  
stronger**