

Suggestions for Small Group Prayers

Connecting with God and with One Another

Opening Prayers

God, we thank you for giving us friends to be with us as we journey through life. Thank you for the grace that you show us through them. Thank you for the gifts you've given each of us to share with one another. Help us to reach out to serve each other and to serve your world in the model of Jesus Christ. Hold us together in love for you and for each other. In the name of Jesus, our Savior, Amen.

Thank you, God, for creating us to be in relationship with you and with each other. Thank you for all the opportunities to listen to one another, learn from one another, and experience life together. Help us to watch for your presence and your guidance in our lives. Thank you for the community of this small group. Be present with us and help us to connect with each other through our prayers and our conversation. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

God, you take such amazing care of us. We see your hand in the gentle rhythms of our lives as we sleep, wake, eat, work, and rest. You surround us with others who love and care for us in our families, in our neighborhoods, at work, at school, and in our faith community. Help us to realize the depth of your nurturing Spirit as we receive your abundant love through others. We ask for hearts and spirits to share your love with one another in this group and beyond. Amen.

Silent Prayer – Set aside 2-3 minutes for silent prayer. Silence gives people a chance to let go of their day and focus on this time together. Tell the group you will begin and end the silence with a spoken prayer. For example:

God, we thank you for this day and for the chance to be together today/tonight. Hold in your loving care our friends and family and all of our concerns while we are together here. Help us to be present to one another and present to you. Open our ears to listen to what you might be saying to us.

Silence

God, be present with us and help us to hear your voice in the conversation here today/tonight. Guide us to know how you would like us to live so that we might live your *Good News* and bring your *Good News* to the world around us. Inspire, encourage, comfort, and love us in this day. Amen.

Popcorn Prayer - In this community prayer, people spontaneously say something that they're thankful for in just a few words. The leader starts with, "Lord, today we thank you for..." or "Lord, today we bring these concerns to you in prayer."

Closing Prayers

God, we thank you for friends inside and outside of this small group. Thanks for friends who laugh, friends who cry, friends who sit with us, and friends who challenge us to grow in faith. Encircle us with your love and strengthen us with your guidance so that we may experience your love and grace through one another. Help us to be a blessing to one another in this group and to extend those blessings to others outside of the group. We ask your blessing for (pray individually for each person in the group by name). Hold each of us in your hands until we see each other again. Amen.

God of grace, we thank you for the grace that this time together has been for each of us. Thanks for pouring out your grace in such abundance that we can share it freely, knowing that there will always be enough. As we go our separate ways, we ask your blessing for (pray individually for each person in the group by name). We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Heavenly Father, you created us as people with a hunger to be connected to others and to you. Thank you for the communities of our families, our neighbors, our friends, our coworkers, and others that nurture and support us. Help us to be open to those around us and to show your love in the world. Thanks for this community and the blessing that each person in this group has been for us today. Be with each of us this month until we are together again. We pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus, thank you for the time we have had together with these friends today. You modeled friendship for us as you walked your journey with close friends. Help us to remember how important friendships are as we journey through life together. Strengthen all our friendships so that we can widen the circle and extend friendship to others. We pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

God, you invite us into a relationship with you and into relationships with each other. Help us to remember what a gift this is. Thank you for all the relationships where we take part in the mystery of your work among us and through us. Help us to be examples of your healing and your grace. Thank you for the blessing that each person in this group has been today. Thank you for being present with us today and each time we meet. Be with us as we continue our faith journeys. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer Requests – Ask the group "what would you like us to pray for this month?" or "how can we hold one another in prayer this month?" Of course, people are always free to not share a

prayer request. As members respond, write down their requests. It works best to simply take the concern without the questions and comments of others in the group (something to tell them ahead of time).

Close with a prayer briefly mentioning the prayer requests that have been spoken or simply pray "God, you've heard our prayers as we've spoken them to one another. Be present with each person in this room and with those we carry in our hearts and with all the concerns on our hearts. Fill us with a sense of your presence and your peace. Amen."

Prayers taken from the *Connecting in Grace* faith studies
or from *Starting Small Groups and Keeping Them Going*, Augsburg Fortress Publishers