

Learning to Pray Out Loud

Many people are afraid or too self-conscious to pray out loud even in a small group or family setting. Here are some quick tips for helping them grow in this area:

1. Start them young if possible! Children only need to be trained while adults need to be retrained!
2. Remind them Who is on the other end of their prayer. The fear most people have is what others will think about their prayer. Reminding them that the only audience is God, helps them to remember that they can come to Him without worry or judgment.
3. A good place to start is with praise. Go around the group and have each person say "God, You are..." and then have them fill in an attribute of God. Or, go through Psalm 145, pulling out attributes and characteristics of God. Have them pray the praises found in the Psalm: "Lord, I praise You because You are...gracious and merciful" (vs. 8).
4. Get them used to hearing their own voices in corporate prayer settings by having them read a scriptural prayer back to the Lord. In a small group, give each person a 3 x 5 card with a scripture on it, or give them a reference to look up and read. A very simple and powerful way to do this is to pray a blessing for the person sitting next to them. For example, they can look at the person and say their name: "Jim, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13). Congratulate everyone when they are done, reminding them that they all just prayed out loud! Here are a few additional blessings: Philippians 1:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, Hebrews 13:20-21.

5. Have a focus and/or a specific target for the prayer:
Pray for someone in your family that doesn't yet know Jesus as Lord and Savior. Model it out loud for them first, or simply be the one to go first.
6. Practice antiphonal (back and forth praying) or already written prayers that can just be read out loud to God.

Encourage every effort. It takes practice for reluctant out loud pray-ers to feel comfortable with the sound of their own voices as they talk to God. Also encourage people to spend time with God just talking to Him...maybe in the car while driving, or on a walk, or while doing dishes. Developing an intimate friendship with the Father is the key to voicing prayers from the heart.