

Praying for Your Small Groups

The following excerpts are from “How to Pray for Your Small-Group Ministry: Head to battle with the appropriate spiritual weapons,” by Andrew Wheeler

It's been said that "When a man works, man works. When a man prays, God works." God calls us to give ourselves to him in leading our small-group ministries, and that will often involve work of many different kinds. But, just as he called the disciples to pray before he called them to go (Matthew 9:35-10:8), he calls us to pray for our ministries.

Paul's prayers for the churches make a great place to start praying for small groups—which, after all, are manifestations of the church. Consider these examples:

- Colossians 1:9-14: knowing God's will, spiritual wisdom and fruit, growth in knowledge of God, endurance, patience, joy, gratitude
- Ephesians 1:17-19: spiritual wisdom and revelation, knowledge of God and of their hope as believers
- Ephesians 3:14-21: spiritual power and faith, knowledge of Christ's love, being filled with God's fullness

These and other prayers of Paul can help us pray for our small groups. For more, see *Praying Like Paul*.

A major success factor in any small group is meaningful relationships. Here are a few ways to pray for relationships in your small groups:

- Pray for a spirit of grace and forgiveness among group members (James 1:19 and Matthew 6:12, 14-15).
- Pray for humility (Philippians 2:1-5).
- Ask God to protect the groups from grumbling and complaining spirits (Philippians 2:14-15).
- Ask God to create environments of encouragement (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- Pray that God will reveal small-group members' spiritual gifts and create opportunities for those gifts to be used to honor him and serve the groups.
- Pray for appropriate levels of intimacy, accountability, and confidentiality.
- Ask God to lead new people into the right small groups, and pray for a spirit of acceptance and welcoming.

Over time, we may come into situations where we find ourselves tiring of prayer. Moses ran into this situation interceding for Joshua and the Israelites in the battle with Amalek. Aaron and Hur came alongside Moses, literally holding his arms up in prayer when he became too tired. God responded to their prayer and granted victory in the battle (Exodus 17:8-13). We will encounter similar times where even prayer seems too burdensome for us, and we falter in our strength and commitment. At these times, it's important to have Aarons and Hurs around us, holding up our arms in prayer. Our small-group coaches can and should be part of this support. Reach out to your coach and ask them to pray for you and your group.