



## GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER IN THE SMALL GROUP

Although The Cornerstone Small Groups are not “prayer groups” - prayer is an essential component of the groups. There are several different formats a Small Group can use for prayer during their sessions.

- The Small Group gathering opens with prayer, which centers the group. Often The Cornerstone Prayer is used.
- Small Group Facilitator(s) may choose to include spontaneous/shared prayer (see below) at the beginning or end of the sessions.
- Members are encouraged to write short prayers after completing the Connection Questions of the weekly lessons. Members may share these after the Connection Questions are answered. This creates a prayerful attitude during the Small Group’s sharing time.
- Prayers shared aloud can be prayers of thanksgiving, contrition, petition or praise. It is suggested that prayer requests be limited to personal concerns and loved ones.
- Discussing prayer requests is not appropriate at this time but details can be shared at community builders, fellowships, etc. or after branch sessions with members of the Small Group.
- Members should maintain **CONFIDENTIALITY** concerning prayers within the Small Group.

### **Shared Prayer:**

Shared prayers are informal, heartfelt conversations with God stated aloud in a group setting. Ideally, they are more than a listing of intentions. Shared prayer at the beginning of a Small Group session can unify and focus members. At the end of the session, it can be a bonding closure for the Small Group. Shared prayer may be a new experience for some. The Small Group may need to “grow” into this practice and it should never be forced on members. Do not be afraid to sit in silence. Allow time for members to say prayers; they may simply need a bit of time to speak. For shared prayer to be included in the Small Group session, time constraints will be a challenge. Therefore, the Small Group Facilitator must move the group in a timely manner to complete the lesson. During shared prayer, members are encouraged to be considerate, thus allowing time for others to share their prayers.

Shared prayer becomes more comfortable for the group as the year progresses. The effects and benefits will be seen as the members learn to pray with and for each other. Shared prayer develops a feeling of love and caring among the members and a community of trust. The members of the Small Group will learn through firsthand experience that truly “the cornerstone of The Cornerstone is prayer.”

WE HAVE FOUND THE CORNERSTONE LESSONS AND PRAYER TIMES TO BE SACRED. *“THE LORD HAS SET APART  
THE FAITHFUL FOR HIMSELF; THE LORD HEARS WHEN I CALL TO HIM.”*  
(PSALM 4:3)