



# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Prayer in Real Life (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

### GETTING STARTED

What is one thing you are thankful for this week and what is one thing we can pray for you this week?

Remind each other of our simple expectations for meeting together.

Do you think it matters how often, where, and when you pray? Why or why not? How have you interpreted Paul's command to "pray always, or pray without ceasing?"

Why is it that we often use our calendars, "to-do" lists, to make sure we don't miss important dates, meetings, or people—but it is difficult to do something similar with prayer?

### QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?

What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

What idea, context, Scripture do you think could have been expanded on, or included in the message?

Why is (1 Thessalonians 16-18) often referred to as the "impossible commands"?

Of the three ways Dave suggested that we can strive to obey these commands—which one do you currently do, which one may you want to "work" on?

1. Pray wherever and whenever you can.
2. Spend time each day in God's word and prayer
3. Develop a "practice" for prayer.

Of the three prayer practices, which one did/would you pick—or, if different, you currently do and would suggest to others?

1. HEART – Honor God, Examine your life, Ask for help, Request for others, Thank God
2. Prayer Cards -- [www.seejesus.net/training/prayer-card-course](http://www.seejesus.net/training/prayer-card-course)
3. Guided Prayer using the Lord's Prayer

### EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-23]

(Yes, these questions can seem silly, however, good discussion and interpretation of the Bible begins with having a proper understanding of the basic facts; who, what, when, and where in the text.) Work through this quickly, the answers are fairly obvious.

How does God want us to regard church leaders/elders? (5:12-13)

How does God want us to treat each other? (5:13-15)

What attitudes represent God's will for us? (5:16-18)

How should we pray? (5:17)

When should we give thanks? (5:18)

What is God's will for us? (5:16-18)

How should we show respect for the Holy Spirit's presence in us? (5:19-22)

What does God want to happen inside us? (5:23)

For what reason can we depend on God? (5:24)

What kind of affection did Paul have for the Thessalonian Christians? (5:26)

Who was to hear the contents of this letter? (5:27)

## QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

Considering this is Paul's final advice and greetings to the Thessalonian Christians...

1. How are the things Paul advises, commands, recommends related to each other? How are they different?

How can you show respect for the leaders/elders at church?

What can we do to live in peace with everyone in the church?

What happens when you pay back evil to a person who has done wrong to you?

Considering that Paul and Jesus weren't always happy, or praying when they were doing things like teaching etc...

What does it mean to pray continually? To give thanks in all circumstances? Always be joyful?

Why is it essential that we ground these 3 commands in verse 18?

In what way can you strive to obey these commands?

What is the value of striving, choosing to obey God in these ways, as opposed to the opposite?

How can prayer relate to our joy and thanksgiving?

In what way can we stifle the Holy Spirit? (in us and to those around us)?

## APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

How can we pray for each other?