**The Pathway of Prayer to Friendship with God**

**Coming together**

**1. Who was your best friend in high school? What made you best friends? Are you still close friends?**

**2. What 2 or 3 qualities are most important in a friend?**

**3. Would you say God is your friend? Is it too informal to talk about God as a “friend”? Do you aspire to friendship with God?**

**Studying God’s Word**

**Read John 15:12-16.**

**4. Whom does Jesus call his friends? (Those who do what He commands). How does it feel to be called his friend?**

**5. What has Jesus done to become our friend? (Loved us; Laid down his life for us; revealed teaching from the Father; chose us; answers our prayers)**

**6. What can we do to develop our friendship with God?**

**Psalm 27:4 – pursue Him.**

**Psalm 119:97 – Read God’s Word**

**John 15:14 – obey Him**

**Matt. 10:32,33 – Take a public stand for Jesus (baptism)**

**Psalm 139:23,24 – be honest with Him**

**1 Thess. 5:17 – pray continually.**

**7. How can we pray continually?**

**Practice the presence of God. Invite God into all parts of our day. Do everything as unto the Lord. (Col.3:23).**

**Short breath prayers.**

**Focus our minds on God throughout the day. (Col. 3:1)**

**Pray back God’s Word to Him: promises to believe and exhortations to obey.**

**8. What’s the biggest competitor to friendship with God? (Friendship with the world).**

**Deeper Reflection**

**9. Agree or disagree: You’re as close to God as you choose to be.**

**10. Read James 4:8: If we feel far from God, what can we do? (Draw near to Him).**

**11. What’s the cost to be a friend of God? What’s the reward?**

**Application**

**12. Spend some time praying together in small groups. Practice the five ‘S” model:**

 **1) Pray subject by subject (conversationally).**

 **2) Pray short prayers.**

 **3) Pray simply.**

 **4) Pray specifically – (would you know when the prayer is answered?)**

 **5) Silence is OK. Listen for how God wants to lead your prayer time.**

**13. Pray for one another in small groups of similar gender.** If someone comes with a need, and has the courage to express it, make sure that person gets prayed for.

**14. Pray-Read God’s Word. Choose A or B.**

**14A. Read John 15:14-17**

14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

Here are some ways to pray-read God’s Word back to Him:

* Thank you for calling me your friend. Help me to obey you in all things.
* Thank you for choosing me to be part of your family. Help me to bear the fruit of the Spirit.
* Thank you for the promise that you will give us what we ask in your Name.
* In your name, we pray that you would…..

 give us greater spiritual hunger

 forgive our sin and make us more like Jesus

 revive us, awaken us and set us on fire for Jesus and His kingdom

* Thank you for your love. Help me to fulfill your command to love others in my family, my brothers and sisters in this congregation, and unbelievers who desperately need you.
* Jesus, what do you see when you see me? How does our church make you feel?

**14B. Read Phil.4:4-8**

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

**Pray God’s Word back to Him:**

* Lord, I rejoice in you today! Thank you that you are near.
* Help me to be gentle with others in my family, at school, and at work.
* God, I give to you my anxiety about…. Instead of worry, I choose to pray about it.
* Thank you that you care about my concerns, and you hear my prayers.
* Thank you for the peace you give me when I give all my cares and concerns to you.
* I choose to focus my eyes on Jesus. He is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise