

GCF Chapter Prayer Meetings – an Orientation

We pray as members of the body of Christ and therefore as citizens of his Kingdom. This means we pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is heaven (see e.g. Matthew 6:9-10). This includes God's will to be done here at the university and our various academic departments where we live and move, and do our studies, teaching, and research.

Keep this a *Chapter Prayer Meeting*. Some relevant Prayer Prompts:

- We pray for our friends and colleagues, believers and non-believers alike that they grow in their knowledge of the Lord Jesus and what it means to follow him, etc. We pray for GCF to be salt and light in our various academic corners, etc. Pray by name for our non-believing friends and colleagues that they may cross “thresholds” toward faith in Christ as Lord. See missionalchristians.org/jge.pdf for a single-sheet overview of Jesus, the Gospel, and Evangelism.
- We pray for GCF activities that are coming up: large group meetings and small groups, key activities where we can invite our non-believing friends and colleagues to such as various social activities that may be offered (consider these entry ramps into Christian fellowship) and especially to some key events such as the Christmas Party in December. Keep praying especially for friends and colleague by name.
- We pray also using any prompts from our *GCF Four Ministry Commitments* (on back) that are centered in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We pray for one another and our academic progress as we cross various hurdles (prelims, major exams, thesis writing and defenses, etc.) and upcoming conferences, job searches, etc. Raise these when it's time for Petition.
- We pray similarly for our brothers and sisters doing their studies at universities in the US and around the world in similar movements of IFES, the *International Fellowship of Evangelical Students*. See ivesworld.org.
- And please let us try to leave other prayers, by and large, for elsewhere. *Immediate family concerns are definitely appropriate for GCF chapter prayer meeting!* But when we start including prayers beyond this, let's bring those up elsewhere such as with each other and in our small groups.

How to Lead a 30-minute Chapter Prayer Meeting

- Begin and End the Chapter Prayer Meeting on time as the norm; others can join as they arrive. Students can catch up later with each other afterwards such as over lunch.
- The prayer meeting leader will need to step in to keep the movements below on time for the meeting to be within 30 minutes. Discretion and wisdom will be needed, but the prayer meeting leader should not feel bashful about moving us all forward.
- We pray using brief prayers! We may pray more than once, but each time we pray let's aim to be brief and without adding excess background or context for our prayers.

A Suggested Format for the Chapter Prayer Meeting

- Read a Short Passage of Scripture that will focus our attention (prayer leader's choice). (~2-3 minutes)
- Move to Thanksgiving prompted by the Scripture Passage (no doing Bible study here, just prayers of Thanksgiving). (~3-6 minutes)
- Move to Silent Confession and then the Leader closes Silent Confession after about 2 minutes with thanking God for forgiving us using language such as thanking God for the Lord Jesus whose blood cleanses us from all our sins. (See 1 John 1:5-2:2 for other such language) (~2-3 minutes)
- Move into the time for Petition. Use the bullet point suggestions above as prompts. You should raise any these first for others to pray for before you go to prayer (e.g., “I have my prelim paper due next week.”). (~15 minutes)
- Close by Re-reading the Short Passage of Scripture and then end with something such as “Amen!” (~2-3 minutes)

The Gospel is a royal announcement. *It's the good news that the Jesus revealed in the Scriptures has been raised from the dead and reigns now as the world's true Lord and King over everyone and everything.* God thus summons all the peoples of the world—including all those at every university—to give their allegiance to this Lord Jesus and to begin re-ordering their lives accordingly as members of his Church, as part of God's One New Humanity in Christ for the sake of the world. This same Lord Jesus returns to Judge the world with justice and to renew all things "in heaven and on earth."

Christian Witness. Christian witness involves being faithfully present in every corner of the University as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God is already at work in the lives of many of our colleagues and friends who are not yet followers of the Lord. We also believe that he desires to use us to help them learn who Jesus is and what it means to follow him as Lord in all aspects of life. Evangelism is thus an essential practice for God's people at the University. And so, we seek to join the spiritual journeys of some of those in our departments and research groups with the goal of helping them become followers of the Lord Jesus for the first time with a view to being lifelong members of his Church, of his One New Humanity.

Christian Spiritual Formation. We continuously are being formed and shaped as persons by the many cultures that have made us who we are to this point in our lives. Our graduate and professional school education and our academic disciplines continue to shape us, consciously as well as unconsciously. Christian spiritual formation requires learning how we are being spiritually formed in ways that shape our loves and desires toward and away from the kingdom of God, toward and away from the love of God and our neighbors. Christian spiritual formation thus has a telos or final goal, which is Christlikeness in all that we are and do as members of God's new humanity. And so, it requires thoughtful intentionality in "putting on Christ" or the "new self" which is being re-created in the image of God's Son as members of his One New Humanity.



Christian Community. We seek to establish embodied Christian community among graduate and professional students, and among faculty members at the University. Our Christian fellowships are neither replacements for the local church nor para-church ministries. Rather they are para-academy Christian communities within the University that live out the new and alternative way of life in Christ together. We also seek to provide welcome space for both followers of the Lord Jesus and for those not yet his followers so that we might together better learn who Jesus is and what it means to follow him as Lord. And so, we seek to be faithfully present in the University as distinctly Christian communities that bear witness to the good news that Jesus is Lord and how to follow him in a life of growing faithfulness.

Integration of Christian faith, learning and practice. Following Christ lifelong requires bringing all aspects of our lives under Christ's lordship as members of his One New Humanity and not least our teaching and scholarship. We are interested in doing evangelism largely in part so that those who study, do research and teach at the University will begin to integrate their faith, learning and practice "in Christ" as his followers. We might say that this means taking off the old academic self and putting on the new academic self. We are also interested in doing Christian scholarship that participates in bringing flourishing to the University and academic disciplines to participate in God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven. And so, integration of Christian faith, learning and practice is a crucial aspect of who we are as followers of Christ in every academic discipline and calling.