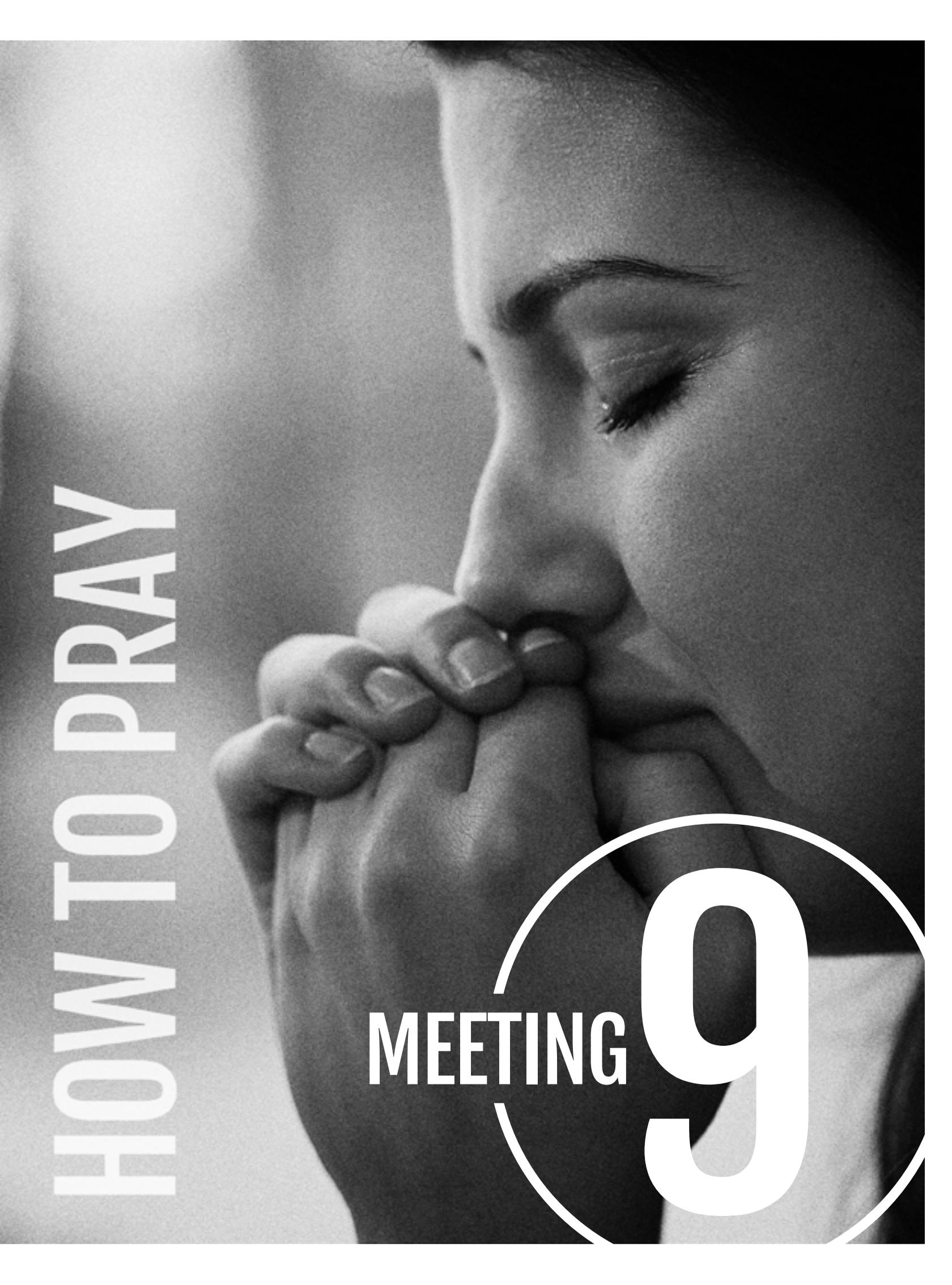


# HOW TO PRAY

MEETING

9



step **1**

## "HIGHS" & "LOWS," AND PRAYER TIME

In accountability, be sure to use your times of "Highs & Lows" not just as positive and not-so-good memories into sharing areas where you truly honored God and areas your need to grow. This habit is an easy way of sharpening one another for our good and God's glory.

step **2**

## FOLLOW UP

Evaluate how you did on last meeting's GO. If you need a reminder of what you pledged to do, turn back to page 58.

NAME	RYG	WHAT YOU DID	WHAT GOD DID
_____	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

NAME	RYG	WHAT YOU DID	WHAT GOD DID
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# step 3

## HOW TO PRAY

*This step is to be completed by each member before they come to Meeting 9.*

The concept of prayer can be a strange thing. I was taught as a child that if I close my eyes, fold my hands, and think in my head, then God would hear me from heaven. Not only that, but he can understand when people pray in Spanish, Chinese, German, or any other language. Not only can God hear everyone's thoughts (which scares me because I'm not always proud of what I think of), but He actually responds to our prayers! Simply by directing thoughts to God, man has changed the course of history. Moses prayed, and the nation of Israel was not destroyed (Ex 23:11-14). Joshua prayed, and the sun stood still (Josh 10:12-14). Elijah ended a three-and-a-half-year drought through prayer (1 Kgs 18:41-45). For Nineveh, God relented from bringing disaster (Jonah 3:5,10). The idea that spiritual communication between God and man can affect the physical world around us is a mind-boggling thing!

There are many commands to pray in Scripture (Matt 7:7-8, 26:41, Luke 18:1, Phil 4:6, 1 Thes 5:17, 1 Tim 2:1). Yet, what is the right way to talk to God? If you are a new believer who didn't grow up in church, this can be a very confusing thing. James 4:2 states that "we do not have, because we do not ask." So, it is clear that God wants us to pray. Yet James 4:3 says, "You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." Thus, it is also clear that there is a right and wrong way to pray. But how does one pray the right way? It is not an easy task. If it was easy, then Jesus wouldn't have taken the time to teach his disciples how to pray. In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus said:

9 Pray then like this:

- “Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.
- 10 Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.
- 11 Give us this day our daily bread,
- 12 and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- 13 And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

Many of you know this as the Lord's Prayer. Jesus was modeling for his disciples how to pray, he wasn't giving them a spell to recite. Although Jesus said "Pray like this", he didn't intend for all believers to only pray these exact words every time they talk to God. There is nothing wrong with praying through the Lord's prayer. God wants us to talk to him from our heart. He isn't looking for the right words. In Matt 6:7, he had just said we are not to "heap up empty phrases" when we pray. Thus, Jesus was giving his disciples (and us) an example to follow when they pray.

From the Lord's Prayer, we can derive 4 things we are to do when we pray. These 4 things are easily remembered by ACTS, which stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Some of you may have learned this method of prayer when you were growing up, but this is not the time for you to tune out. There is a bigger picture here. Soon, you will be a GO Group Leader. As Jesus taught his disciples to pray, you will be responsible for training your members how to pray. Not only this, but they will need to know it so well that they can turn around and train someone else. This is because the idea of prayer will be absolutely foreign to someone in a future GO Group. Therefore, you must be able to pass down a basic tool on prayer to the disciples after you. This way any new disciple can get started in the right direction. This goes back to 2 Timothy 2:2, which spoke of 4 generations. Paul trained Timothy, and Timothy was responsible for training faithful men who would turn around and teach others. So everyone needs to know this well! With this said, let's get back to ACTS.

## ADORATION

Prayer starts with adoring God. This means we **recognize him for who he is**. Jesus does this in verse 9-10 of the Lord's Prayer. Jesus recognizes God as our King and our Father. Since he is King, we must yield to his authority. This leads Jesus to pray "hallowed be your name". Jesus is really saying here, "may you make your name greatly revered" on earth as it is in heaven. Prayer is about making much of God; it's not about making much of ourselves. This is why we start with adoration, and not with our requests. If we only give requests, then we are really giving God demands and making prayer about us. God is not a genie. Prayer begins with recognizing that God has the right to say "No". God is King. He does as he wills. He is all about what brings him glory. Yet, if God is just our King, then it seems like he is a tyrant. But don't forget that God is also our Father. We know God is not a tyrant because he sent his Son to die for us. Even though God is in complete control, he wants us to come before him with requests. Like any good father, God does not give us everything we ask for. Only a bad father does this. Rather, he gives us what is best for us. We may not see it as good in the moment, but we can trust that what most glorifies God is also best for us. When we acknowledge that God has the right to say "No", over time what we want begins to align with what God wants (cf. 1 John 5:14). This dynamic is perfectly seen in the Garden of Gethsemane. In Luke 22:42, Jesus prays, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done." Jesus was asking God for another way to save humanity instead of dying on the Cross. Yet, He adored God and gave him the right to say no. God did say no. The only way for man to be saved was through Christ's death and resurrection. Jesus didn't just teach this principle, he lived it. Let us follow this example when we pray.

Examples of Adoration:

- *"Lord, you are Mighty God. Nothing can stand against you."*
- *"Though you created the world and govern all that is in it, you are not too busy to listen to my prayer."*
- *"You are never unfaithful. Every promise you make comes true."*

## CONFESSION

We first approach God by recognizing who he is. Next, we recognize who we are. All of us sin every day. We learn from the Lord's Prayer is that we need to confess our sins. Verse 12 says, "forgive us our debts." Debts are synonymous with sins or transgressions. Yet it is not enough to just admit that we have sinned. Biblical confession is never simply just an admission of guilt. The idea of biblical confession is best understood by the word repentance. The idea of repentance adds in an intention to turn away from that sin. To repent is to admit to sin and turn away from that sin. We see this idea of turning away from sin in the second part of verse 12, "as we also have forgiven our debtors". We can't receive forgiveness and not change. You are hopefully learning this as you start each meeting with confession. You confess and turn. The fact that we have been forgiven and loved by God frees us from sin. If we continue holding onto grudges, it shows that we don't understand how much God has forgiven us. If we continue to be unloving, it shows that we don't understand how loved we are. Yet none of us are perfect. We need help. Jesus recognizes this in verse 13 saying, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Jesus is not saying that God leads us into temptation, but without God's help we won't be able to resist temptation (cf. Matt 26:41). He will also heal the wounds of sin through confession (cf. James 5:16). Therefore, we confess by admitting our sin, turning away from that sin, and asking God to help us resist sin in the future. So, in prayer we give God the right to say "No" by recognizing him as King and Father. Next, we confess our sins by repenting and seeking help against sin. We then move onto thanksgiving.

Examples of Confession:

- *"I was harsh and quick to speak with my wife. That is not how you taught me to love my bride. I repent. Help me to heal any wounds that remain, to listen well, and to speak words of kindness."*
- *"In my heart, I hated my boss because of what happened today. I know I am to support and submit to authority, but I don't have that capacity without Your help. Forgive me and help me to honor the authority in my life."*

## THANKSGIVING

When we give thanks to God in prayer, we are recognizing all that he has already done for us. This step isn't explicitly seen in Lord's Prayer, but it is absolutely there. (It is seen explicitly in Eph 5:19-20, Phil 4:6, Col 4:2, & Heb 13:15). Prayer requires faith. To an atheist we are just talking to a wall, but we believe we are communicating with the God of the Universe. When Jesus tells his disciples to pray, he is assuming that God is going to listen. The fact that the God of the Universe listens to your prayers should never stop blowing your mind. Not only this, he doesn't want us to pray what he wants to hear. He is a Father who wants to listen to his children (cf. Ps. 145:18-19). We ask for daily bread and forgiveness for two reasons. First, we believe God will do this for us. Second, we have seen him do this in the past. Since he has already done this in the past, we already have much to be thankful for. This step was made explicit to combat a tactic of our enemy. One of Satan's schemes is to get us to minimize the provision of God

and focus on what God hasn't given us. We see this in Genesis 3, as Eve is tempted to forget the entire garden (which was bigger than the current nation of Israel) and focus on the fact that she couldn't eat from one tree. Thinking back on all that God has done reminds me that he is good and he is for me. This empowers me to trust him no matter what happens. When my heart is full of thanksgiving, I pray. When I am not thankful, I complain. Jesus didn't teach us how to complain. He taught us how to pray. Therefore, we must consider what God has already done for us.

Examples of Thanksgiving:

- *"Thank you for providing all my physical needs."*
- *"Yesterday, when you felt so far away, you heard my prayer and reminded me of your presence by giving me patience that was not my own."*
- *"You have surrounded me with a rich church family."*

## SUPPLICATION

Once we have recognized who God is, who we are, and what God has already done for us, we now move into making our requests known to God. Supplication is just a fancy word for "an earnest request". At this point in your prayer, you begin to pray for your wants, and needs and the wants and needs of others. We see this in verse 11, "Give us this day our daily bread". Here we are taught to pray for our physical needs. Elsewhere, we see prayers that include our wants and the needs/wants of others (Luke 22:42, Rom 15:30-32, Phil 4:6). Your requests can be physical, emotional, or spiritual. The easy part is laying before God all that is on your heart. What is more difficult is remembering to pray for other people in your life. Writing requests down can help. The **Echo app** can help remind you what to pray for as well. You can use it to share prayer requests with each other and can even notify someone that you have prayed for them. Your GO last meeting was to gather prayer requests from the people in your family and your Crossroads. As you gather them, **write them down in the space allotted in Step 4 of this meeting** (at the bottom of page 64).

Examples of Supplication:

- *"Give me patience with my children, so as a mother I might better demonstrate your love."*
- *"Give me favor with the international student I met yesterday. Give me an opportunity to talk about you with her."*
- *"I am completely exhausted and it's only Wednesday. Give me the ability to finish the work week well."*

Now you know the ACTS method of prayer! **Every time** you open and close a meeting, someone will practice this method. Here is a quick summary:

**ADORATION** *Recognizing who God is*

**CONFESSION** *Recognizing who we are and our need for help*

**THANKSGIVING** *Recognizing what God has already done*

**SUPPLICATION** *Telling God our requests*

For a great example of ACTS being used in Scripture, read King Jehoshaphat's prayer in **2 Chronicles 20:1-13**. See if you can find his adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Hint: Confession is recognizing who we are and our need for help, not just confessing sin.

step **4**

## PREPARE TO PRAY

*This step is to be completed by each member before they come to Meeting 9.*

During this meeting, you will spend almost all your time praying together using the ACTS method. To pray for that long, you will need to be prepared on how to adore, confess, give thanks, and supplicate. Do this by answering the questions below.

### ADORE

In what ways can you adore God for who he is? What about him is worthy of worship? (for help see Isaiah 40:25-31, Col 1:15-20, Ps 103, 145:14-21). Write these reasons down in the space below.

### CONFESS

Is there sin in your life that you need to repent from? Are there thoughts you are not proud of? Are there things you wish you did that you don't do? Write these down here.

### THANKSGIVING

What does Scripture say God has already done for us? (for help see Ps 139:1-18, Eph 2:1-9, 1 Pet 1:3-5, 2 Cor 5:17-21, Col 2:13-15). How have you seen God be faithful and kind to you in the past? Have you recently noticed God working in your life or the life of someone else? What are you thankful for? Write these down here.

### SUPPLICATION

What prayer requests do you have for you and your family?

Your group GO last meeting was to gather prayer requests from those in your Crossroads. If they gave you anything to be praying for, write it in the space below.

# step 5

## PRAY TOGETHER

This step is to be completed by the GO Group **during** Meeting 10.

Let's not just talk about how important prayer is. Let's actually pray together. Spend the next 30-45 minutes praying using the ACTS method. You are going to pray through everything you prepared in Step 4 with your group now.

Your group is welcome to do this however you want, as long as you go in order (A-C-T-S). Since it may be hard to pay attention if one person prays their prepared ACTS at one time, here is one suggestion to keep everyone engaged: pray one letter at a time as a group. So, everyone will start with Adoration, praying through what they wrote down. Each member can pray through their entire list, or you can popcorn around (you might have to explain "popcorn" to a new believer). Next, everyone moves to a time of Confession, then Thanksgiving, and finally Supplication following the same pattern. Pray for as long as you need to. If you go shorter or longer than 30 minutes, that's no problem. The exciting part is you have just moved from talking about praying for the lost to actually doing it together!!

So, turn back to step 4 and start praying through what you prepared.

# step 6

## GO TIME!

As a group, your GO is to continue praying for God to raise up disciple-makers out of those in your Crossroad Map. Build prayer for the lost into your time of abiding at least once a week.

NAME

WHAT I WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

\_\_\_\_\_

Pray for those in my Crossroad Map  
using the ACTS method

WHEN: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME

WHAT I WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

\_\_\_\_\_

Pray for those in my Crossroad Map  
using the ACTS method

WHEN: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME

WHAT I WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

\_\_\_\_\_

Pray for those in my Crossroad Map  
using the ACTS method

WHEN: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME

WHAT I WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

\_\_\_\_\_

Pray for those in my Crossroad Map  
using the ACTS method

WHEN: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME

WHAT I WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

\_\_\_\_\_

Pray for those in my Crossroad Map  
using the OCTS method

WHEN: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NAME

WHAT I WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

\_\_\_\_\_

Pray for those in my Crossroad Map  
using the OCTS method

WHEN: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## END GROUP WITH PRAYER

### NEXT MEETING OBJECTIVES

Meeting 10 contains a video to watch *during* the meeting. Make sure your group has a means to watch this video.