



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 7: God Listens
Suggested Week of Use: October 18, 2020
Core Passage: Isaiah 37:14-20, 30-35

News Story Summary

A recent survey regarding Americans' prayer habits showed that at the beginning of the pandemic 49 percent of Americans said they prayed more than usual. The survey, commissioned by The Presidential Prayer Team, a non-partisan group dedicated to facilitating intercessory prayer for the country's leadership, also revealed that 66 percent of American adults pray at least once a week, another 10 percent once a month, and 15 percent never pray. The survey concluded that prayer is, thus, "the nation's most widely practiced religious activity." Reasons people give for praying include communicating with God, having a relationship with God, worshiping God, coping with situations, getting hope, reducing anxiety, and having made it a habit. Those who pray at least once a month said they mainly pray for people in their lives. Next, in order of frequency, they pray for the country (61%), members of the military (53%), government officials (46%), the president (45%), and people with whom they disagree on issues (33%).

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the term "Most Americans Pray but Disagree about How Prayer Works".)

Focus Attention

To replace the Begin idea under Focus Attention, begin by asking: *How often do you pray? Why do you pray?* Call for volunteers to respond. Share information from the prayer survey, focusing mainly on the reasons people gave for praying. Ask: *What surprises you about Americans' prayer lives?* Complete the step by following the Respond idea.

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the Respond idea under Summarize and Challenge ideas, call attention to Isaiah 37:20. Emphasize that Hezekiah asked for a positive response to his prayer so the world would know that there is only one God. Recall the information from the survey that showed why people pray. Emphasize that the majority of those surveyed identified themselves as Christians. Ask: *How would our prayer life change if we, like Hezekiah, prayed that the answers to our prayers would glorify God?* Complete the step by leading the group to discuss the first question set under Apply the Text.