

Praying Is Easy

A Guide to Prayer

Simple Ways to Pray

The following simple formulas are easy ways to organize a prayer. Select one and try it for seven days. Return to the formula for prayer as often as you can each day. Be sure to allow time to listen to God as well.

ACTS

- A - Adoration** - praise God for who God is
- C - Confession** - own up to our sins
- T - Thanksgiving** - thank God for all God has done
- S - Supplication** - make requests for ourselves and others

Five-Finger Prayer

- Thumb** - pray for those closest to me
- Pointing finger** - pray for those who guide us: teachers, doctors, clergy, counselors, social workers, mentors
- Middle finger** (tallest one) - pray for those who stand tall: government, civic, and business leaders, police and firefighters
- Ring finger** (your weakest finger) - pray for those who are weak: the poor, sick, infirm, infants, homeless, and the powerless
- Pinkie** (the smallest, the least) - pray for me and my needs

Take a TRIP with God

Ask the following questions:

- T - Thanks:** For what am I thankful?
- R - Regret:** What do I regret?
- I - Intercession:** Whom do I need to pray for?
- P - Purpose:** What is my purpose or plan? (this day, week, my life)

PARTS of Prayer

- P** - Praise
- A** - Ask
- R** - Repent
- T** - Thank
- S** - Share

Jump Start Your Prayer Life

Many Christians believe in prayer, but need a jump start. Here are seven ways you can jump start your prayer life in order to grow a more intimate relationship between you and God. Select a couple of them to implement in your life starting this week.

1. Set aside a time and place for daily prayer. This is the single most important thing you can do. When we establish a regular routine for prayer, we will make sure that our prayer life is not just 'on the run', or when our backs are up against the wall, or when our buildings are being brought down by terrorists.

2. Begin your prayer times by slowing down and quieting down. When we come to prayer agitated and stressed, it is especially difficult to hear God's voice and to sense God's presence. Spending a quiet minute or two focusing and breathing deeply can help quiet our minds and spirits and make two-way prayer more probable. Allow for some silence in your life. This silence doesn't have to be long. It can be as short as 30 or 60 seconds to begin with and then gradually extend it to longer times as you get more comfortable with silence and waiting and listening for God.

3. Have a prayer conversation with God. Simply begin a conversation with God, like you might with a good friend. It could go something like this:

Good Morning, Lord. It's me,(name). This is my situation.....This is how I am feeling.... This is how I need your help..... What should I do?

(Silence.)

I am concerned about these people.... Because....What should I do?

(Silence.)

Lord, guide me in... thanks, Lord for listening. I am counting on you.

4. Pray the Bible. Take a few moments to read something from the Bible and direct attention toward God. Use a Bible passage you are already familiar with to help you get started praying. Focus on the contents of the Scripture passage and allow it to steer your time spent in prayer. Slowly read a single verse or short passage two or three times. Pause for some silence in between each reading to allow God's word to sink deeply into your heart and mind. Record some of your favorite Bible verses in a notebook and pray with one or more of them when the need arises. All of Scripture does not speak equally to us. Pick out those verses that mean the most to you. Put yourself in the Biblical story and ask God what God might be saying to you about yourself, your life, your priorities, your relationships, your time, your money management -- you.

5. Write out your prayers. Name what is going on in your life. Sometimes simply by naming and articulating what we are thinking, feeling or experiencing - such as "I'm thinking about changing careers" or "I feel lonely" or "I feel hopeless about..." or "I am overwhelmed" can help us gain focus and reclaim a portion of the power our life experiences have drained from us. Writing it down, composing a short prayer and giving it to God can be an empowering ritual.

Many people find keeping a prayer journal to be a helpful discipline.

6. Recall how God has helped you in the past. God told Israel over and over to "Remember how the Lord God brought you out of bondage in Egypt." It is as we remember the past saving acts of God that we gain greater trust in God's power and love. And so Jesus says "Eat the bread in memory of me." When we are caught up in our stress, pain or suffering, it is easy to forget how God has helped us in the past. The trials of life can cause us to lose perspective and weaken our sense of trust in God's caring presence. But as we remember how God has helped us in the past we can be filled with hope for today and tomorrow. "O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come."

7. Develop a Prayer Rolodex. Put together a rolodex with names on them. Use either 7 or 30 cards. On each card put together a short list of people and then take one card each day and pray for the people on the list. A short list allows you to go deeper into prayer for each person and yet keeps several people in your prayers every day. If you use seven cards, you have one for each day of the week. If you use 30, you have one for each day of the month.

Are these 7 ways the only ways to pray? Of course not! They are simply some tools you can use to jump start or beef up your prayer life. Pick a couple of them to implement in your life starting this week. How you pray isn't important. What is important is that each of us prays every day. *Written by Glen VanderKloot*

Add "So That" To Your Prayers—

The "so that" principle is a tonic for a boring prayer life. Many times our prayers are good but aimless. We ask God to "bless" someone or to "strengthen" someone, but we have no particular end in view. When you add "so that" to your petitions, it forces you to ask yourself, "What do I really want God to do in this person's life?" And if you don't have a reason for praying a particular prayer, perhaps it's not worth praying in the first place. For example:

"So that you may overflow with hope" (Romans 15:13).

"So that you may know him better" (Ephesians 1:17).

"So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:17).

"So that you may be able to discern what is best" (Philippians 1:10).

"So that you may have great endurance and patience" (Colossians 1:11).

"So that you will be blameless and holy" (1 Thessalonians 3:13).

"So that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you" (2 Thessalonians 1:12).

Classic Prayers

You are invited to include the following prayers in your devotional life. These prayers have blessed many people over the years. May each prayer be a blessing to you as well. The first prayer is one Jesus taught his disciples when they asked him to teach them to pray.

The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4; Matthew 6:9-15) **(Traditional)**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive
us our trespasses, as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

(Contemporary)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread,
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

The Serenity Prayer (*attributed to Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr*)

Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot
change, The courage to change the things that I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

Peace Prayer (*attributed to St. Francis of Assisi*)

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is discord, union;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it
is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Morning Prayer (*Written by Dr. Martin Luther*)

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected us through the night from all danger and harm. We ask you to preserve and keep us, this day also, from all sin and evil, that in all our thoughts, words, and deeds we may serve and please you. Into your hands we commend our bodies and souls and all that is ours. Let your holy angels have charge of us, that the wicked one have no power over us.
Amen

Evening Prayer (*Written by Dr. Martin Luther*)

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have this day so graciously protected us. We beg you to forgive us all our sins and the wrong which we have done. By your great mercy defend us from all the perils and dangers of this night. Into your hands we commend our bodies and souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels have charge of us, that the wicked one have no power over us.

Popular

Prayers, Poems, and Quotes

Thank you, Lord, for always answering prayer, but not indulging my every petty, private "give-me". Thank you winnowing and refining, vetoing and delaying, refusing and revising. Thank you for being God and never less, for freeing me for wide horizons, for protecting me from my limited vision and wayward will. Thank you for foiling my every effort to unseat you and make myself king. Thank you for keeping it safe for me to pray.

--Gerhard E. Frost, From Seasons of a Lifetime: A Treasury of Meditations (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989, p. 118)

To pray means to open your hands before God. It means slowly relaxing the tension which squeezes your hands together and accepting your existence with an increasing readiness, not as a possession to defend, but as a gift to receive.

--Henri J.M. Nouwen, From With Open Hands (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Marie Press, 1972, p.154)

Holy God – in this precious hour, we pause and gather to hear your word– to do so, we break from our work responsibilities and from our play fantasies; we move from our fears that overwhelm and from our ambitions that are too strong, Free us in these moments from every distraction, that we may focus to listen, that we may hear, that we may change. Amen.

--Walter Brueggemann, *From Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003 p. 61)

O Lord our God, grant us grace to desire you with a whole heart, so that desiring you we may seek you with a whole heart, so that desiring you we may seek and find you; and so finding you, may love you; and loving you, may hate those sins which separate us from you, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

--St. Anselm, 1033-1109, *From The Doubleday Prayer Collection*, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 11)

Our Father, you called us and saved us in order to make us like your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Change us, day by day, by the work of your Holy Spirit so that we may grow more like him in all that we think and say and do, to his glory. Amen.

-- Soren Kirkegaard, 1813-1855

From The Doubleday Prayer Collection, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 11)

I am only a spark, Make me a fire. I am only a string, Make me a lyre. I am only a drop, Make me a fountain. I am only an ant hill, Make me a mountain. I am only a feather, Make me a wing. I am only a rag, Make me a king!

--prayer from Mexico

From The Doubleday Prayer Collection, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 12)

You who are over us, You who are one of us, You who are also within us, May all see you in me also, May I prepare the way for you, May I thank you for all that shall fall to my lot, May I also not forget the needs of others... Give me a pure heart - that I may see you, A humble heart - that I may hear you, A heart of love - that I may serve you, A heart of faith - that I may abide in you.

--Dag Hammarskjold, 1905-1961, *From The Doubleday Prayer Collection*, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 13)

God of your goodness, give me yourself, For you are sufficient for me... If I were to ask anything less I should always be in want, For in you alone do I have all.

--Julian of Norwich, 1342-1413, *From The Doubleday Prayer Collection*, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 14)

Lord, if You have to break me to remake me, let Your will be done.

--Marian Wright Edelman, *From Guide My Feet* by Marion Wright Edelman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. p. 62)

Give us, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy affection may drag downwards; give us an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; give us an upright heart, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. Bestow upon us also, O Lord our God, understanding to know you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you and a faithfulness that may finally embrace you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

--Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274, From *The Doubleday Prayer Collection*, compiled by Mary Batchelor (New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 12)

Father, behold thy child; Creator, behold thy creature; Master, behold thy disciple; Savior, behold thy redeemed one; Spirit, behold thy cleansed one; Comforter, behold one whom thou dost uphold; So I come to thee, O infinite and unimaginable, to worship thee.

--Margaret Cropper, 1886-1980, From *The Oxford Book of Prayer*, Geo Appleton, general editor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 137)

Lord by thy grace, let the poor see me be drawn to Christ and invite him to enter their homes and their lives. Let the sick and the suffering find in me a real angel of comfort and consolation. Let the little ones of the streets cling to me because I remind them of him, the friend of all little ones.

--Mother Teresa, 1910-1996, From *The Harper Collins Book of Prayers*, compiled by Robert Van de Weyer (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1993, p. 352)