

HOW TO PRAY

God is there for you and He wants to hear from you. There are many ways to pray to Him. Prayer is your conversation with God in your own personal way. He is more interested in you talking with Him than in how you do it. It is important that you pray often, with thanksgiving and in the name of Jesus. It is more powerful to pray out loud, however sometimes that is not appropriate. When we can't pray aloud, a prayer in our thoughts is better than no prayer.

I pray daily for my children and grandchildren to pass down a heritage of faith through all coming generations until Jesus comes again, that Jesus may draw them all up at the last day. You may choose to pray for this to happen, too. God is able and He will do it.

Inhaling the Bible and exhaling prayer is spiritual CPR. It will improve your relationship with God and enrich your life. God will hear your prayer and answer you, so that you can learn to know His voice, discern His will and follow His will. God not only loves you, He likes you, and He wants to hear from you. Pray, then wait in patient expectation, believing that He will answer. It is written in Proverbs 8:34 *"Happy are those who listen to me."*

We are given the Lord's Prayer, a perfect prayer model, in Matthew 6:9-13. "Jesus said: *'This, then is how you should pray: 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. Amen.'*"

"...pray continually..." 1 Thessalonians 5:17 A way to pray continually is to pray "breath prayers" to God. Brief phrases can be repeated in a breath, such as "Help me, Jesus!" "Thank You, Jesus," "You are my God," "Thy will be done," "I love You, Lord," or ... your choice.

As you advance in your relationship with God, you will probably find that you want to have a regularly scheduled prayer session, praying aloud, at least once a day in a quiet place.

Some like to pray first thing in the morning: *"...in the morning my prayer comes before you."* Psalm 88:13

Some prefer to pray in the evening: *"May my prayer ... be like the evening sacrifice."* Psalm 141:2

Some prefer to pray many times during the day: *"... I call to God, and the Lord saves me. Evening, morning, and noon I cry out... and He hears my voice."* Psalm 55:16-17

Your prayer position is whatever feels right to you. A classic prayer position is kneeling with your head bowed, eyes closed, and hands together. Some prayer suggestions to consider:

- Pray aloud
- Call His name, tell Him you worship Him, and ask that His will be done
- Acknowledge His supremacy (...You are my King, above all others...)
- Give Him thanks for the many blessings you have received and name some blessings
- Confess your sins and ask His forgiveness
- Freely forgive anyone who has ever wronged you
- Ask God to bless you and stay near you
- Ask Him to enlarge your territory only for His honor, praise and glory
- Tell Him what is going on in your life and how you feel about it
- Ask His help for yourself and/or others
- Ask Him to help you because you are His child and “...*Your gracious hand, Lord, is on everyone who looks to You...*” Ezra 8:22
- Ask the Holy Spirit to hover over the one you are praying for until the mission is finished.
- In the name of Jesus. Amen.
- Wait upon the Lord; He may have something he wants to tell you.

“*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*” Colossians 3:17 This is why we pray “In the name of Jesus.” We only ask for what Jesus would ask for, and only as Jesus would pray.

We can test whether something is in the will of Jesus by the following guidelines:

- It must agree with Scripture
- It must be guided by the Holy Spirit
- There must be an open door for it
- There must be peace in it

Scripture to help you pray according to His will: 1 John 5:14-15, Matthew 6:10, 26:42

Marriage/Divorce: Malachi 2:16, Mark 10:2-9

Healing: Psalm 103:3, 147:3, Acts 9:34, James 5:13-16

Salvation of a loved one: 11 Peter 3:9, Romans 5:8, Titus 2:11. 1 Thessalonians 5:9

Material Blessings: Proverbs 10:6, 10:22, 28:20, Exodus 23:25-26, Malachi 3:10-12, Matthew 6:33, Jeremiah 29:7, 11:14

As you become more comfortable talking with God, you will find praying verses from the Bible to be a powerful approach. When you pray God’s own Word, you are using His language to communicate with Him, using Bible verses that may be paraphrased or personalized, but not distorted. It is the heritage and the privilege of every believer to be able to communicate with our Commander. Prayerful lives are powerful lives. Some Biblical support:

“*‘Is not my Word like fire,’ declares the LORD, ‘and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?’*”

Jeremiah 23:29 What power to harness as we advance in our prayer life. As we learn to pray God’s Word, we harness this mighty power. A prayerful life is a powerful life.

“For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword...” Hebrews 4:12 The Bible is an energizing tool for powerful praying. It is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. We can make a real difference with our Biblical prayers.

“...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5 In praying God’s Word, we choose to think God’s thoughts rather than our thoughts or Satan’s thoughts. We choose to become more like Christ. When we pray a Bible verse, we are taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. God will be delighted and respond.

“Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” Mark 11:24-25 We must forgive all those who have ever wronged us for our sins to be forgiven.

This is a wonderful prayer model: *“...we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”* Colossians 1:9-12

“Jesus said, ‘If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.’ ” Matthew 17:20 We are told to say to the mountain to move, not to think to the mountain to move. The spoken prayer is much more powerful and effective than the thought prayer.

We pray for others because God wants us to love one another and help one another. This is called intercessory prayer. We intercede for others as Jesus and the Holy Spirit intercede for us. *“Jesus always lives to intercede for them.”* Hebrews 7:25b and *“...the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”* Romans 8:26b

The Word of God commands praying for others, and the Will of God demands praying for others. We are commanded to pray for all the believers. We also pray for nonbelievers to become believers.

The following pages contain simple prayer guides that may be helpful to you:

The Heavenly Pattern for Intercessory Prayer

ACTS of Prayer

Five Finger Prayer

Daily Devotions to Keep You Close to God by Dr. Tony Evans

I Hope You Dance

Become a Prayer

Whisper Jesus

Spell Prayer

Personal Prayer Language

Saint Theresa’s Prayer

Mary Queen of Scots’ Prayer

The Heavenly Pattern for Intercessory Prayer

Jesus is the Victor – We're the enforcers
 Jesus is the Redeemer – We're the releasers
 Jesus is the Head – We're the Body
 His work empowers our prayers
 Our prayers release His work
 Ours extends His – His effectuates ours;
 Ours activates His – His validates ours;
 In Kingdom Enterprises, we're not in the production department.
 We're in the distribution department.
 (This is the Big difference)
 We're only a distributor of what Jesus has already produced.
 Be bold! Send one! Enforce the victory!
 (Taken from "Intercessory Prayer" by Dutch Sheets)

ACTS OF PRAYER

The following is a guideline which you may wish to use for your time in prayer:

- A ADORATION** To worship and honor God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit for who they are, and what they have done, and what they are doing on our behalf. Psalm 100:4-5; Psalm 111
- C CONFESSION** Confessing our sins and asking forgiveness for our shortcomings – for missing the mark – and to receive God's forgiveness. 1 John 1:9
- T THANKSGIVING** The giving of thanks for our salvation, answered prayer, protection, provision, etc. Psalm 95:1-7
- S SUPPLICATION** To ask humbly, earnestly, and fervently of God, in Jesus' name. Philippians 4:6-7; James 5:16

FIVE FINGER PRAYER

Prayer is a conversation with God, not a formula. Yet sometimes we might need to use a particular “method” to freshen up our prayer time. We can pray the Psalms or other Scriptures (such as the Lord’s Prayer), or use the ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication) method. The following Five Finger Prayer guide can be helpful when praying for others.

- When you fold your hands, the thumb is nearest you. Begin by praying for those closest to you – your loved ones. *Philippians 1:3-6*
- The index finger is the pointer finger. Pray for those who teach – Bible teachers, preachers and especially those who teach children. *1 Thessalonians 5:25*
- The next finger is the tallest of your fingers. It reminds you to pray for those in authority over you –national and local leaders, and your supervisors at work . *1 Timothy 2:1-2*
- The fourth finger is usually the weakest. Pray for those who are in trouble and suffering . *James 5:13-16*
- Lastly, is your little finger. It reminds you of your smallness in relation to God’s greatness. Ask Him to supply your needs. *Philippians 4:6,19*

Whatever method you use, just talk with your Heavenly Father. He wants to hear what’s on your heart.

It’s not the words we pray that matter, it’s the condition of our heart.

(Taken from June 2, 2005 Devotional of “Our Daily Word”, written by Anne Cetas)

The following is quoted from “Time To Get Serious, Daily Devotions To Keep You Close To God” by Dr. Tony Evans.

“Don’t worry that you pray poorly. Worry if you don’t pray at all.”

“The Holy Spirit only groans when you groan in prayer. He doesn’t groan just with your words.”

“Since we sometimes pray outside of God’s will, part of the Spirit’s job in prayer is to change our minds, not convince God to give us what we want.”

“Do you need to take flight today and see things from God’s vantage point? That flight begins on your knees.”

“Unanswered prayer can be as big a blessing as answered prayer if it keeps us from violating God’s will.”

“When things get tough, we learn how to really pray. Maybe that’s one reason things get tough.”

REFLECTION

“Our devotional studies...led off with two verses that tell us how we should feel about prayer. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul says simply, “Pray without ceasing.” And Colossians 4:2 urges, “Devote yourselves to prayer.” You know what that tells me? It should be abnormal for us as Christians not to pray. Prayer should be as normal a part of our daily lives as eating and breathing—not just a hushed, holy exercise we engage in for a few minutes on Sunday morning.

Is it abnormal or normal for you to pray? If you pray abnormally, then don’t be surprised if you hear from God abnormally. If you pray every now and then, you are going to hear from God every now and then.

Paul says prayer should be so important to us that it is the rule, not the exception. But we have it backwards, because we see prayer as interrupting our schedule, not our schedule interrupting prayer.

Have you ever tried to sit down and talk with a friend when the kids keep interrupting, the phone starts ringing, and there’s someone at the door? You want to deal with those distractions so you can get back to the important stuff, your conversation.

That’s how we should be with prayer. The interruptions are what we call our schedule. The real job is prayer. If your days are crowded with too much schedule, look for distractions you can eliminate so you can have time to pray.”

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I HOPE YOU DANCE

When I meditated on the word Guidance,
I kept seeing "dance" at the end of the word.
I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing.
When two people try to lead, nothing feels right.
The movement doesn't flow with the music,
and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky.
When one person realizes that, and lets the other lead,
both bodies begin to flow with the music.
One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back
or by pressing lightly in one direction or another.
It's as if two become one body, moving beautifully.
The dance takes surrender, willingness,
and attentiveness from one person
and gentle guidance and skill from the other.
My eyes drew back to the word Guidance.
When I saw "G" I thought of "God," followed by "u" and "i".
"God, "U" and "I" dance."
God, You, and I dance.
As I lowered my head, I became willing to trust
that I would get guidance about my life.
Once again, I became willing to let God lead.
My prayer for you today is that God's blessings
and mercies be upon you on this day and everyday.
May you abide in God as God abides in you.
Dance together with God, trusting God to lead
and to guide you through each season of your life.
This prayer is powerful and there is nothing attached.
If God has done anything for you in your life,
please share this message with someone else,
for prayer is one of the best gifts we can receive.
There is no cost but a lot of rewards;
so let's continue to pray for one another.
And I hope you dance.

BECOME A PRAYER

Life is about challenges, choices, and changes. Accept your challenges, make your choices, live your changes.

"Grant us such an awareness of your mercies we pray,
that with truly thankful hearts we may give you praise,
not only with our lips but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service
and walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days."

The Book of Common Prayer

"But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit." Jude 201

Thomas Merton wrote that when he first arrived at the Abbey of Gethsemane, he came to believe that Gethsemane was the center of the universe, that it was the prayer of the monks living there that was keeping the world from flying apart at its increasingly well-worn seams. Not because these men were so holy, but simply because they prayed. He may or may not be right about their holding the world together, but there is no doubt about the fact that there is something powerful about being in the presence of those who are willing to come to God's attention.

Perhaps they were among the thirty-six.

In the Hebrew tradition, there is told the story of the thirty-six who are faithful - so faithful, in fact, that God refuses to have the world come to an end as long as they are alive. It is their devotion that holds the world together. No one but God knows who they are; even they themselves do not know.

I am not certain what you would find if you found them - lawyers, doctors, schoolteachers, homemakers, shortstops, maybe even the monks of Gethsemane. I do expect that you will find evidence that they live their lives in the rhythm of prayer that is prayed without ceasing, prayer that has been prayed until they themselves have become a prayer.

Robert Benson

WHISPER JESUS

Today I felt a burden, and I knew that I should pray,
for God's Spirit seemed to tell me you were having a bad day.

I don't know what the problem is, but I sure do know the cure
and if you will only let Him God will keep you so secure.

In life there are always problems cropping up to spoil our day
but, my friend, you know the answer all you have to do is pray.

If you still feel you're defeated, and you want to run and hide,
just call out and He is there standing closely by your side.

So remember, whisper Jesus, for He's just a prayer away
He's so close that you can touch Him all you have to do is pray.

SPELL PRAYER

For those new to praying, you might want to try spelling prayer like this:

Prepare yourself. Find a location that is comfortable where you will not be disturbed. "*Jesus withdrew from others, knelt down, and prayed.*" Luke 22:41

Repeat a simple Bible verse or familiar prayer or hymn or praise song. Breathe slowly for several seconds, being conscious of your breathing and then repeat the verse or prayer, or sing (or recite) the words to a hymn or praise song.

Acept God into your heart. To do this, center into the very heart of you. Consider the part of you that feels (or wants) love, the part that feels sadness, or the part that is happy. Then ask God to come into that part of you.

Yield all that bothers you to God. Whatever is troubling you, turn it over to God. Know that God understands your problems, even if no one else does.

Enjoy God's presence. Just spend some time "looking at and loving" God. Feel God's strength and peace.

Review how you are feeling. You might want to record these thoughts and feelings in a journal.

PERSONAL PRAYER LANGUAGE

A personal prayer language is intended for your communication with our Lord God and gives Him control to direct your prayer according to His will and His plan. When you give up control of your prayer, you release mighty power.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can receive the gift of a personal prayer language, or a new tongue. It is written in Acts 2:4: *“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”*

According to Mark 16:17, Jesus said *“And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons, they will speak in new tongues;”*

If you wish to be filled with the Holy Spirit and receive the gift of a personal prayer language, first confess your sins, asking for forgiveness for each one, then forgive all who have wronged you. Read your Bible faithfully and pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that you may receive the gift of a personal prayer language. You may have to pray for this spiritual gift for quite a while before it is granted to you. Once you receive it, you will be able to evoke the awesome might of the Holy Spirit at any time and for any length of time.

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” Romans 8:26

SAINT THERESA'S PRAYER

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.

PRAYER TEXT BY MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS
MUSIC ARRANGEMENT BY DR. DANIEL L. KRAMLICH 2011

Keep me, O Lord, from all pettiness,
Let me be large in thought, word and deed,
Let me leave of self-seeking, have done with all fault finding.

Help me put away all pretense,
That I may meet my neighbor face to face without prejudice
May I never be hasty in my judgments,
But generous to all and in all things.

Make me grow calm, serene and gentle.
Teach me to be straight-forward, make me unafraid.
Grant that I may realize the trifling of life creates differences,
That in the higher things we are all one.
And O, Lord God, let me not forget to be kind.
Amen