

Basics of Prayer

A Simple Guide for Learning How to Pray

Pray without Ceasing

Prayer is our expression of submission to and need of God. It is one of the ways that we acknowledge who God is.

Prayer is not just talking ... it also involves listening.

Growing in unceasing prayer starts with creating space to learn how to pray.

“Pray without ceasing.”

[ongoing dependency]

1 THESSALONIANS 5:17

Use Dick Eastman’s prayer wheel adapted from his book *The Hour That Changes the World* for creating the space to learn how to pray. For a one-hour version, take five minutes for each segment and read the corresponding scripture as you go through each segment. For a half-hour version, take three minutes to go through each segment.

1	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Praise and Worship <i>Psalm 63:3</i> Begin this time of prayer by praising, worshipping, and recognizing God’s nature. Take this time to praise and worship him for who he is.
2	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Waiting on the Lord <i>Psalm 45:10</i> Waiting on the Lord means a silent soul surrender to God and his will. Ask him to give you the strength to surrender everything of your life to him.
3	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Confession of Guilt and Sin <i>Psalm 139:23</i> This is probably the heaviest portion of this prayer time. This is the time to confess your idolatry and your rebellion against God. Ask him to search you and know you.
4	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Praying Scripture <i>Jeremiah 23:29</i> In this prayer time, read and respond to scripture. Read and pray through Psalm 8 as you take this time to pray through scripture.
5	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Watching <i>Colossians 4:2</i> Be on the alert! In these 5 minutes, pray for the Lord to keep you aware and ready while praying. The enemy wants to hinder and distract you, but Jesus wants us to stand firm against those attacks.
6	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Intercession <i>1 Timothy 2:12</i> Prayer of intercession is a powerful prayer. Take this time to pray for the lost, maybe someone you know specifically or the people group you are trying to reach.
7	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Petitions <i>Matthew 7:7</i> What are your needs? Philippians 4 says to bring your requests before God. Come to him in humility and meekness, yet with a boldness as his dearly loved children.
8	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Thanksgiving <i>1 Thessalonians 5:18</i> Even in the midst of hard and challenging times, you can express your thankfulness to Jesus for his continued faithfulness and for what he has done and will continue to do.
9	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Singing <i>Psalm 100:2</i> Singing by yourself or in a small group can seem weird. However, singing is one way of expressing our worship to God. Even if it is simple, sing to him for his greatness, love, kindness, etc. Do not be ashamed to sing to the God who loved you enough to purchase you with his own life.

10	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Contemplation/Meditation <i>Joshua 1:8</i> In this time, meditate on the words of what God has said, be still and contemplate the promises that God has made.
11	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Listening <i>Ecclesiastes 5:2</i> It may seem weird to sit down for three-to-five minutes, quiet your mind, and just listen to what God might have to say. He might not say anything in this time to you, but just listen and practice quieting your mind.
12	5 mins. or 3 mins.	Praise <i>Psalms 52:9</i> End this time of prayer with praising him! How exciting is it that we get to come before this great and holy God, Yahweh, and pray directly to him? Praise him for how great he is and the work he has done in your life.

Get Away & Alone

The only way you will develop a consistent and effective prayer life is if you intentionally set aside time and make space to listen and be alone.

Get rid of distractions. Write down any distracting thoughts in a journal so that you can keep focused and return to those items later to address them. Also, you can often turn distracting thoughts into prayers.

Practice praying out loud when alone.

Practice in Groups

The early church regularly prayed together. Corporate prayer represents our collective unity and cry to God. Praying with others is a great way to learn how to pray. You can learn new ways others pray, new things they pray and ask for and even how to pray for longer periods of time.

A Pattern for Prayer

The Lord's Prayer was not meant to be a rigid prayer to be said word-for-word. It was meant to be used as a template to help us learn how to pray. Walk through the Lord's Prayer below for a helpful tool in learning how to pray.

MATTHEW 6:7-13

Our Father in Heaven

- Start in the posture of a child. (*I love to give my children good gifts ... so does our Father in Heaven!*)
- Remember His love for you expressed in Jesus as you approach him. (*You can do it boldly!*)
- You stand in the same place as Jesus.

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

LUKE 5:16

When you pray, go into your room (closet) and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.

MATTHEW 6:6

- Rehearse the truths of the Gospel and invite the Spirit to remind you all of that is true of Jesus and now you in Him.

Hallowed Be Your Name

- Move toward praise and thanksgiving.
- Praise Him for who He is and thank Him for what He has done.
- Use the Psalms to help you with this if necessary.

Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done

- Commit yourself to His will.
- Pray kingdom prayers ... that what is true in heaven will be true here.
- Pray for his rule and reign over your life and what you are able to influence.
- Ask Him to reveal any place in which you are not seeking his kingdom first.

Give Us ... Our Daily Bread

- Ask him to meet your basic needs.
- Bring your petitions before him.
- Bring the needs of others before him.

Forgive Us Our Debts ...

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal unbelief or rebellion.
- Acknowledge it as sin and ask him to forgive you.
- Extend forgiveness to others.

Lead Us Not into Temptation

- Ask the Spirit to reveal areas of weakness or vulnerability to the evil one.
- Ask for power to overcome sin and deliverance from the evil one.

Helpful Tools for Prayer

- *The Praying Life* by Paul Miller
- A prayer journal
- An MC prayer journal
- Prayer groups