

HOW TO PRAY

A MODEL FOR PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

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Prayer is the intimate communion where the human soul, acknowledging its Creator, steps through the veil of the temporal into the throne room of the Eternal.

It is not merely a monologue of requests, but the divinely appointed dialogue where God transforms our hearts and aligns our will with His. It is the breath of the new man, drawing in the grace of God and exhaling His praise.

As the Puritan Thomas Watson aptly stated, "Prayer is nothing else but the revelation of the soul's desires to God."

With this understanding, let us explore a biblical strategy to structure our personal devotion, ensuring we approach God not only with reverence but with relational depth.

1. START WITH GRATITUDE: The Posture of a Thankful Heart

Begin every time of personal devotion by consciously framing your life within the context of God's goodness.

Before you utter a single request, before you confess a single sin, pause and recount the specific blessings, both great and small, that God has lavished upon you.

This act of thanksgiving shifts your focus from your circumstances to your Benefactor. It moves you from a mindset of lack to one of abundance in Christ.

Gratitude is the key that unlocks the gates of God's presence, reminding us that we are approaching a generous Father, not a

reluctant bureaucrat.

PSALM 100:4 NIV

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

2. PRAISE HIM FOR HIS MANY BENEFITS:

Thanksgiving acknowledges what God has done; praise adores who God is. After entering His “gates” with thanksgiving, we are called to come into His “courts with praise.”

Praise Is God’s Favorite Genre of Music and I am His Favorite Singer

This is the natural progression from gratitude for gifts to worship of the Giver.

Praise magnifies God’s character—His holiness, faithfulness, power, and love.

It is the soul’s response to the revelation of God’s nature. As you praise, you are not informing God about Himself; you are aligning your spirit with the ultimate reality of His supremacy and worth.

This act of worship prepares your heart to hear from Him, for we cannot truly know God’s will until we are first lost in wonder at His person.

PSALM 100:4-5 NIV

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

QUOTE: “The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance.” - C.S. Lewis

PSALM 22:3 NKJV

But you are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.

3. OPEN YOUR BIBLE AND READ HIS WORD: Let God Speak First

In any meaningful conversation, there is a time to speak and a time to listen. Prayer is no different.

The most critical error in our devotional life is to do all the talking.

God's Word is His revealed voice, and it must be the primary conversation starter. By opening the Scriptures, you are inviting God to set the agenda. You are listening to His heart, His promises, His commands, and His character before you present your own thoughts and needs. This practice ensures that your subsequent prayers are informed, shaped, and refined by His truth, making them more likely to be in accordance with His will.

PSALM 119:11 NIV

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

PSALM 19:14 NIV

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

QUOTE: "To pray effectively, you must pray in the will of God. And to pray in the will of God, you must know the Word of God." - R.A. Torrey

ROMANS 10:17 NKJV

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We Cannot Even Believe For Our Petitions Until We Sit With God's Word

If there's something specific you need from God find biblical texts that deal with that subject and meditate on them.

4. MEDITATE ON WHAT YOU ARE READING: The Soil of Repentance and Revelation

Reading brings the truth to us; meditation brings us to the truth

This is the sacred pause in your devotion where you sit in God's presence with an open Bible and an open heart. It is not an emptying of the mind, but a filling of the mind with Scripture.

To meditate is to ponder, to chew on, to question, and to apply a specific verse or passage.

As you do, the Holy Spirit will bring revelation—illuminating your understanding—and conviction—revealing areas of your life that are not in alignment with God's truth.

This is the fertile ground where repentance naturally occurs. You see His holiness, you see your own shortcomings, and you are moved to turn from sin and toward His grace.

JOSHUA 1:8 NIV

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

QUOTE: "Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God." - J.I. Packer

ROMANS 12:2 NIV

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

5. CULMINATE WITH PETITIONS AND WORSHIP: Praying from a Transformed Heart

Only after you have given thanks, offered praise, read the Word, and meditated upon it are you truly prepared to bring your petitions before God. The order is crucial. The previous steps have reshaped your perspective.

You have glimpsed God's heart, understood His character more deeply, and submitted your mind to His truth. Consequently, the things you are now compelled

to ask for will have changed.

Petitions born from self-centered anxiety are replaced by prayers for God's kingdom, God's will, and

God's glory to be manifest in your life and the lives of others. Your "shopping list" of requests is refined into a sacred dialogue where you partner with God in His purposes. You may find that what you intended to ask for is no longer the agenda, as God has given you His heart on the matter. Conclude this time with renewed worship, acknowledging that He is both the source and the answer.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6 NIV

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

1 JOHN 5:14 NIV

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

In following this model—Gratitude, Praise, Scripture, Meditation, Petition—we move beyond treating God as a celestial vending machine and into the profound depths of a relationship with our Heavenly Father. We learn to approach Him not just for what He can give, but for who He is, trusting that in His presence, we ourselves are the ultimate recipients of His transformative grace.