



# PRAYER

## Finally, Prayer — a quick-access guide to the Christian’s vital breath

### What Prayer Is,

- a **relationship**, not a ritual—conversation with the living God.
- the primary way we **commune, listen, and align** our hearts with God.
- a place of **worship, surrender, request, intercession, and encounter**.
- both utterly simple and endlessly deep.
- powered and guided by the **Holy Spirit**. Ephesians 6:18<sup>1</sup>

### Why Prayer Matters

- Jesus modelled a life saturated in prayer. Mark 1:35
- Prayer invites God’s **kingdom, power, and wisdom** into real situations. Matthew 6:10
- It shapes us—prayer doesn’t just change things; it **changes us**. Psalm 51:7-11
- It keeps ministry from becoming human-powered. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
- It sustains intimacy, joy, resilience, and mission. Ephesians 6:18 & Romans 14:17

### Core Convictions About Prayer

- God **hears, cares, and responds**. 1 John 5:14
- We approach the Father with **confidence** through Christ. John 14:6
- The Spirit helps us when we feel weak or unsure how to pray. Romans 8:26
- Prayer can be **structured** or **spontaneous**, noisy or quiet<sup>2</sup>.
- There is no “expert level”—every believer is invited in.

## Types of Prayer

- **Thanksgiving** – cultivates joy and spiritual clarity. Psalm 100:4
- **Adoration** – enjoying God for who He is. Psalm 145:1-8 (& 9-21)
- **Confession** – honesty restores relationship and frees the heart. Psalm 139:23-24
- **Intercession** – praying for others, nations, situations. 1 Timothy 2:1-4
- **Petition** – bringing personal needs and desires before God. Matthew 7:7-8
- **Listening Prayer** – waiting, sensing, discerning. John 10:27 & 1 Kings 19:12
- **Prophetic/Spirit-led Prayer** – Scripture impressions, rhema words, burdens.
- **Contemplation** – resting, abiding, being still. Psalm 46:10

## Making Prayer a Habit

- **Set a daily rhythm**—morning, midday, evening.
- Develop a **prayer list of Scriptures**, to serve as truths and reminders to help you engage with God<sup>3</sup>.
- Use simple frameworks<sup>4</sup>:
  - **ACTS** (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)
  - **PRAY** (Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield; or Praise, Repent, Ask & Yield – you decide.)
  - **THE LORD’S PRAYER!** Praise, Purpose, Petition, Pardon, Protection.
- Differentiate between times of **direct focus** (personal devotions) and **general awareness** (God in the everyday).
- Build **micro-prayers** into the day: “Lord, lead me”, “Thank you”, “What’s the Spirit saying?”
- Additional resource. **Lectio Divino** (*divine reading*)<sup>5</sup> is a 3<sup>rd</sup> century tool that combines Scripture reading with prayer (a healthy discipline to nurture). It uses four stages, *read, meditate, contemplate and pray*, in equal portions. The discipline of giving the same amount of time to each stage brings spiritual balance and avoids bias or neglect.

## Listening to God

- Expect the Spirit to speak through,
  - **Scripture** (eternal truths inspired by God)
  - **Inner promptings and peace**
  - **Prophetic impressions**

- **Dreams, visions, pictures**
- **Wise counsel**
- **Circumstances and timing**
- Test everything by Scripture, godly character, and a healthy community<sup>6</sup>.

### Intercessory Prayer

- Stand in the gap for people and places God highlights. Ezekiel 22:30
- Pray **Scripture** over situations—it gives authority and clarity.
- Persist: some breakthroughs come through **continued, faithful**, even **stubborn** prayer. Luke 18:1-8
- Fast occasionally to sharpen focus and dependence. Christian disciplines build confidence.
- Expect resistance; intercession is an act of **spiritual warfare** as well as compassion.

### Praying With Others as a Cultural Norm

- In small groups: short, simple, and participatory.
- In gatherings: allow Scripture, worship, and prophetic prayers to weave together<sup>7</sup>.
- In pastoral moments: honouring, gentle, kind, and Spirit-led.
- In evangelism: offer to pray there and then; offer to pray for 'felt needs' before their 'spiritual needs'. The man born blind in John 9 and the transformation of Zachaeus are examples of this – felt needs met leading to spiritual transformation (John 9:35-38 & Luke 19:8-10).

### 'Do not Quench the Spirit' 1 Thessalonians 5:19

- Welcome the **gifts of the Spirit** in prayer—tongues, prophecy, discernment.
- Leave room for the **Spirit** to interrupt, redirect, or highlight something unexpected.
- Value **silence** as much as spontaneous prayer; both create space for divine encounters.
- Stay grounded: the **Spirit's charisma with godly character** keeps prayer healthy.

### Common Barriers – and how to overcome them

- **Distraction (wandering thoughts)** – use pen and paper and scribble your prayers.
- **Dryness** – use your **Scripture prayer list**, plus, thanksgiving and praise to stay fresh.
- **Condemnation (often false guilt)** – remember grace; prayer is not earned.
- **Busyness** – schedule prayer before everything else schedules you.

- **Doubt** – pray honestly; “I believe, help my unbelief.” Mark 9:24

### The Fruit of a Healthy Prayer Life

- A heart tender to God.
- Your spirit sensitive to God’s Spirit.
- Greater spiritual confidence and spiritual discernment whilst remaining humble.
- Strength to resist temptation and discouragement.
- Compassion for people and a hunger for mission.
- A life (and church life) marked by **joy**, **righteousness** and **peace**. Romans 14:17

### Finally, In One Sentence

**Prayer is the Spirit-led, Scripture-shaped, relational conversation through which God forms us, guides us, and releases His kingdom on earth.**

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<sup>1</sup> I’m not a great supporter of ‘poof-texts’, our textual ability to quote chapter and verse is not always helpful, or accurate, and can often blind us to the rest of the passage. Please acknowledge this reality and use all these Bible references as signposts to God’s much broader resource document – *the Bible!*

<sup>2</sup> We all have personal preferences, and God too, has preferences for His creation. So, we need wisdom and honesty to spot the difference between a cultural preference and a biblical instruction. Calm seas never made a skilled sailor; your comfort zones are probably hindering from spiritual growth.

<sup>3</sup> Some examples from my list but start your own! Psalm 34, Psalm 27, John 15:1-17, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Revelation 1:12-18 and 1 John 1:1-4

<sup>4</sup> These work well when using pen and paper to scribble your prayers. You don’t need to keep a readable record or official prayer journal, however, writing your prayers, repeating phrases, underlining, circling words, are all great ways to focus your prayer life from the obvious dangers that come with ‘hands together, eyes closed.’

<sup>5</sup> There’s a helpful downloadable file where you found this link.

<sup>6</sup> Discerning God’s leadings and sensing His ‘nudges’ are essential parts of the Christian walk. For our safety, God has given us the Bible, wise godly friends, and a healthy church community. Well, I pray you have all three.

<sup>7</sup> Prayer, praise and prophecy can all be defined separately, though in times of corporate worship, they ought to form a heavily overlapping Venn diagram, where these three aspects of biblical prayer (communion with God) blur and run into each other – *marvellous*.