

PRAYER

God desires to talk with us. Hear us. Spend time with us. Prayer is not about the right words, but about the right heart. Prayer is about connecting our heart to His through conversation. Mother Theresa describes prayer as, not asking, but putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depths of our heart.

"In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart."
- Paul Bunyan

What role does prayer play in your life and how comfortable are you talking to God?

What has shaped your view of talking to God?

Talking with God can be uncomfortable at first, even the disciples asked Jesus, how do we pray? Jesus said, pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Matthew 6:9-13 (NKJV)

Jesus gives us some pointers in the Lord's Prayer and we will add a few for you to bring into your conversations with God.

1. PRAISE - express warm approval or admiration of God! Start here!

Jesus prayed, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

When we praise God, we place Him above all else. This is giving worth to God, not thanks for what he does for us. Telling someone thanks for something is different than telling someone how much they mean to us! See the difference?

"Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live." Psalm 146:1-2 (NIV)

Read: Psalm 100; Isaiah 25:1; Psalm 150:6, Psalm 42:11, Psalm 139:13-14, Psalm 9:1, Psalm 71:8

Reflect: What are some things that you praise God for? What are some things that you love about God?

2. PETITION - is to make our requests known to God. Asking God to fulfill a need.

Jesus prays, "give us this day our daily bread."

Read: Philippians 4:6-7; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:1; 1 John 5:15; Daniel 9:17; 1 Samuel 1:27

Reflect: What are some things you would like to bring before God today and ask of Him?

3. CONFESSION - acknowledging our sin and imperfection before God and our desire to forgive others.

Jesus prays, "forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors."

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (NIV)

Read: James 5:16; Proverbs 32:5; Leviticus 5:5; Acts 3:19; Psalm 32:3; James 4:8

Reflect: Are there some attitudes or sin that you hold in your heart or mind, that don't line up with God's desires for you?

4. THANKSGIVING - revealing a heart of gratefulness.

Jesus prays, "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever."

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever." Psalm 107:1 (NLT)

Read: 1 Chronicles 16:34; Colossians 3:15, Colossians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Psalm 28:7, Psalm 50:14; Ephesians 5:20

Reflect: What are five things you are thankful for today?

5. INTERCESSION - bringing concerns of others to the Lord.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel Ephesians 6:18-19 (NIV)

Read: Psalm 5:1-3, Psalm 55:1-2; 1 Timothy 2:1; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; Matthew 5:44; 1 Samuel 12:23; 1 Kings 13:6

Reflect: Who are some people that God has put on your heart to pray for today? What will you pray for them?

The greatest use of your words is prayer.
Talk to God about EVERYTHING, all the time.
Maintain a running conversation.

- Rick Warren