

Wednesday, March 15

“At the heart of any real relationship is conversation, and this is especially true when it comes to our relationship with God..” (pg. 25 Foundations: An Introduction to Christian Practices)

Where are you at in your prayer life?

Searching: I believe there is a higher power, just not how to connect with that.

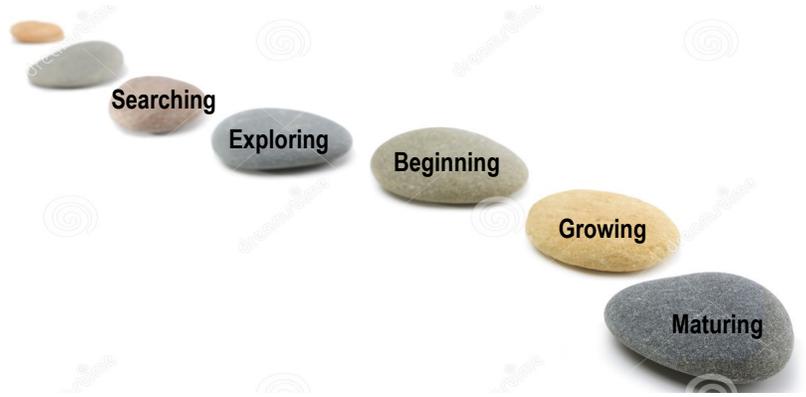
Exploring: I enjoy listening to others pray, wonder if I could ever be that intimate.

Beginning: I try to spend a few minutes a day in prayer, like using a model or written prayers.

Growing: I enjoy extended times of prayer and experiment with a variety of prayer methods.

Maturing: I enjoy extended times of prayer and am developing a habit of praying in circumstances throughout the day.

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Looking at the list above, where are you at in your prayer life?

An Action Step or SMART goal that will help me grow in my prayer life is:
Specific:

Measurable (how will you measure this?):

Action-Oriented:

Realistic:

Time :

Someone who could support me in developing this is:

Here's how to make SMART goals:

S **Specific**
State exactly what you want to achieve. Can you break a larger task down into smaller items?

M **Measurable**
Establish clear definitions to help you measure if you're reaching your goal.

A **Action-Oriented**
Describe your goals using action verbs, and outline the exact steps you will take to accomplish your goal.

R **Realistic**
Give yourself the opportunity to succeed by setting goals you'll actually be able to accomplish. Be sure to consider obstacles you may need to overcome.

T **Time-Bound**
Now much time do you have to complete the task? Decide exactly when you'll start and finish your goal.

Small Group Discussion Questions:

- If we have been created for relationship with God, why is prayer so difficult at times?
- What is your best time of the day? Can it be a time of prayer?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17. What do you think this means? How is this possible?
- How could you develop a stronger sense of continuous prayer in your life? Look at the different ideas on the back, pick one to try.
- How would you feel about publicly praying for someone as a need arises?

Prayer Resources

Using the Lord's Prayer as a Model for prayers:

Our Father who art in heaven...

How do you sense the loving presence of the Father (whom Jesus called Abba-Daddy) in your life today? What do you long for?

Hallowed be thy name...

How might God's name be lifted up, made holy, in your life?

Thy kingdom come....

Where, in your life, is there a need for God's reign?

Thy will be done....

What guidance are you seeking from God?

On earth as it is in heaven....

Where is the gap between heaven and earth that needs to be filled by the presence of God?

Give us today our daily bread....

What needs do you have that only God can provide?

And forgive us our trespasses....

What do you need to confess to God, that you might be forgiven?

As we forgive those who trespass against us...

Whom do you need to forgive?

And lead us not into temptation?

What temptations are you facing today?

But deliver us from evil....

Where do you need God's protection?

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever....

Praise God! (Matthew 6:9-13)

One of the simplest and most well-known models for prayer time is the ACTS format:

A— Adoration: Proclaiming who God is and the attributes of His character. (take time to adore God and give Him the affection of your heart. Do not ask for anything.)

C— Confession: personal cleansing, repentance, putting on of Christ's nature. (repent of a specific area, ask God to provide you with the opposite: ask for joy instead of depression; humility instead of pride)

T— Thanksgiving: praise offering, remembering the works of the Lord, meditation (thank God for what He has already done)

S— Supplication: Asking, intercession, and petitioning according to His will (ask God to give you the desires of His heart)

The 5 Finger Prayer

Thumb: Those closest to you, your family.

Pointer: Those that point you in the right direction (teachers, doctors, priests) ask for wisdom & support.

Index: (tallest) Those that lead us, (Government) ask for guidance & wisdom.

Ring: (weakest) Those that are weak, in trouble, or in pain. We cannot pray too much for them.

Pinkie: (smallest) Our prayers for ourselves & our own needs.



Praying your calendar:

Some people find it helpful, especially when beginning the day with a devotional time, to pray through their calendar. As they consider the activities of the day, the people with whom they will interact, and the challenges they will face, this becomes a time to place all of those things before the throne of God.

Prayer Apps

Consider putting a mobile app on your phone like: Mobile Knee— Prayer List App or Mission St. Clare

Examen:

For those ending the day with a devotional time, a helpful practice is the prayer of examen— considering the activities of the day (e.g. imagine watching a video of your day) and developing an awareness of how God was present throughout the day. This aspect is called the examen of consciousness and includes a reflection on how we have responded to God. A second aspect is the examen of conscience in which we uncover our needs for cleansing, forgiveness, and healing.