

## 21. Centering prayer

Choose a word (Jesus, Holy Spirit, love, mercy) as a focus and repeat that word silently for a set amount of time. The point is to be "simply resting in the presence of God."<sup>2</sup>

## 22. Pray through the Stations of the Cross

## 23. Take a prayer walk and use creation to help you pray

## 24. Take a prayer retreat for a day or weekend

## 25. Have scheduled times of prayer

Sometimes having shorter but more frequent times of prayer keeps our heart more focused on God. For example, you might pray for five minutes each day at 9am, 12, 5, and 9pm.

## 26. Find objects to hold in your hands as you pray for people/things

Example: hold a rubber band to help you pray for a pliable heart.<sup>3</sup>

## 27. Use visual aids

Look at a painting, the cross, a picture, a map, etc.

## 28. Use the senses

Use incense or candles as an aid to worship.

## 29. Use your imagination

For example, Richard Foster suggests that "when praying for persons with sexual problems, it is a joy to picture a river that has overflowed its banks and invite the Lord to bring it back into its natural channel."<sup>4</sup>

## 30. Have certain days where you focus on specific social justice or humanitarian issues

Example: pray for the Middle East on Monday, human trafficking on Tuesday, clean water on Wednesday, Refugees on Thursday, homelessness on Friday, etc.

## 31. Pray through your calendar

Prayer for and over the people you'll see, the things you'll do, decisions you'll make, etc.

## 31 Ways to Pray (Individual Prayer)

*"Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us"*<sup>1</sup>

The following are some suggestions to help keep your prayer life fresh and creative as well as to bring some structure to your times of prayer. Prayer is a learning process, and sometimes it is good to experiment with different ways of praying so you can see what works well for you.

These different ways to pray are guides to help keep you focused and centred in your times of communion with God. When you feel a grace to pray for something else while following one of the outlines, leave the form and then come back to it if needed; don't slip into "saying prayers" instead of praying. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in other directions.

Often it is a good idea to stir up your faith before prayer by reading these passages: Proverbs 15:8, 29; Matthew 7:11; John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24; 1 John 5:14-15.

Here are some different outlines, scripture passages, and ideas for your times of prayer.

### 1. The ACTS acronym

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication (requests)

### 2. The 4 Fs

Family

Friends

Finances

Future

### 3. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

Pray through the Lord's Prayer, stopping after each section for reflection. Example: pray "give us today our daily bread" and then begin to ask God for the things you need today—the physical, spiritual, and emotional nourishment that is necessary.

<sup>2</sup> Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 185.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 59.

<sup>4</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 44.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 3rd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 33.

**4. Acts 1:8**

Use this pattern in Acts to pray for your community, city, province/state, country, and the world.

**5. The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)**

Pray through all nine of them, asking God to help you with each one.

**6. The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-22)**

Spend time praying about and meditating on each of the nine.

**7. The Armor of God (Ephesians 6:14-17)**

Put on the armor of God so that you can stand firm.

**8. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)**

A great passage to pray through.

**9. Psalm 51**

A prayer of cleansing for sin.

**10. Pray the Scriptures as you read them**

As you do your Bible reading, respond in prayer to what you read. For example, you might read Psalm 112:1, "Happy are those who fear the Lord, who greatly delight in his commandments," and respond by praying, "Lord, help me to delight in your commandments. Help me to find them pleasurable, attractive, pleasing, and desirable. I want to love and cherish your commandments. Help me to be bent and inclined toward your commandments and your righteousness, not towards evil and the ways of the world."

Follow this outline: Pray Scripture, Ponder it, Personalize it, Print it (journal), Proclaim it (share).

**11. Write out your prayers and begin forming a prayer notebook or journal**

Before long, you will have dozens of prayers of your own that you can read to God.

**12. Use the written prayers of others**

Buy or begin to compile on your own the hundreds of written prayers of others and use them in your prayer times. Some recommendations: *The Book of Common Prayer*, *Encyclopedia of Prayer and Praise*, *Celtic Daily Prayer* (Northumbria), *500 Prayers for Young People*.

**13. Pray/sing to music**

This is not a crutch, it's a gift and grace from God—use it!

**14. Be silent and listen**

Prayer is a two-way conversation—just as much listening as it is talking.

**15. Use non-verbal language**

God's language is deeper than words, so use other expressions such as tears, sighing, smiling, drawing, etc.

**16. Have a picture prayer wall**

Put up visual reminders of people, places, and things to help you pray.

**17. Pray in the Spirit**

For those in the Pentecostal/charismatic tradition, spend time praying in tongues.

**18. Learn to pray "in the moment" prayers**

Pray for people you pass during the day, for someone God brings to mind, for a person while you're talking to them, when you see a situation that needs prayer, etc.

**19. Learn the discipline of fasting**

Try one meal a week or one day a week to set aside for prayer.

**20. Practice the presence of God by repeating a short prayer for an extended time**

Examples:

The Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." (Luke 18:13)

"As you know and as you will, have mercy" or

"Lord, help."