

On Praying...

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

Mahatma Gandhi

How do I pray?

'Lord, teach us to pray'

This request was put to Jesus by his own disciples – which should encourage us if we feel we don't know how to pray. They needed help, and so do we, especially in times of trouble.

But there isn't just one right way to pray – what works well for one person may not for another. The following thoughts and ideas on the following pages are offered just as guidelines which may be useful:

When we pray, we come before God with the world on our hearts. We are also offering ourselves to be in some way small channels of love and peace in God's world.

God already knows what is in our hearts and minds. We can be honest with God, and say exactly how we feel, or even sit in silence.

It might help to find a quiet space. You may want to be alone, but you may find it helpful to be with someone else.

You may find you cannot say just what you want to so use written prayers from books or the internet (see resources at the back) or use the methods listed here to help focus your prayers.

ACTS of worship...

Adoration – First love, adore and praise God in whom we live and move and have our being. Praise him for his noble acts, praise him for his excellent greatness.

Confession – A sense of all that God is and all he does for us will bring home our own unworthiness, how often we fail to live up to even our own ideals. So we confess our sins and weaknesses to God and ask for forgiveness.

Thanksgiving – The knowledge that we are truly sorry and mean to do better, that we are truly forgiven makes thankfulness well up in our hearts and we remember our many blessings, health, home, food, work, friends, play, our Church and the joy of being alive.

Supplication – Having adored God, having confessed our sinfulness, having thanked him for all his goodness and loving kindness, then and then only we ask for more blessings. We make our supplications first for the needs of others, for great causes, for friends and enemies, these are our *I* intercessions. Afterwards we pray for ourselves telling God our hopes, our fears and needs. These are our *P*etitions.

Use something to help you focus your prayer, perhaps a cross...



...or maybe light a candle to remind you of Jesus' presence.





Use your hand, your fingers can be used to bring to mind different things to pray about.

Thumb: *the strongest digit, give thanks for the strong things in your life like home and family, relationships that support and sustain you.*

Index finger: *this is the pointing finger. Pray for those people and things in your life who guide and help you. Friends, teachers, doctors, nurses, emergency services and so on.*

Middle finger: *the tallest finger. Pray for important people who have power in the world, our political leaders, the Royal family and local leaders*

Ring finger: *the weakest finger.*

Remember the poor, the weak, the sick and bereaved.

Little finger: *the smallest and last finger. Pray for yourself.*

...or maybe light a candle to remind you of Jesus' presence.

Use something to help you focus your prayer, perhaps a cross...



Start a prayer diary or a journal, here is scheme of intercessions you can adapt for your own use...

Sunday – *The Church of God, the continuing work of the Church. For clergy and all who work for the Church helping to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. For events that affect the Church.*

Monday – *The Church overseas, for Christians all over the world, those who are persecuted for their faith. For Church missionaries and those they work amongst. For the removal of racial barriers that we can come to a better understanding of our neighbours.*

Tuesday – *For all nations, for events in the news both national and international. For our leaders, the monarchy and for the hungry and oppressed lands without political freedom.*

Wednesday – *For our community, for those who live and work in our part of the world. For workers, for schools, for those who are unemployed or working in difficult or dangerous conditions.*

Thursday – *The old and lonely, Christ was lonely on this day in the Garden of Gethsemane. Pray for those who do not have anyone to care or pray for them and are known to God alone.*

Friday – *For all who need Christ's love, for those suffering and dying. For those who do not know God – that He will make his presence felt in their lives. For those caring for the sick, for Doctors and Nurses and all in the caring profession. For the departed.*

Saturday – *The Church at home. Give thanks for those who care for us, for a roof over our heads, clothing and food on the table. Bring to God any special concerns of your own concerning you or your family.*

A Responsive Lord's Prayer for two or more.

Our Father in Heaven,

**Remind us constantly that you are parent to all your children,
Whoever, or wherever they are or come from.**

Hallowed be your name.

Your Kingdom come,

Establishing peace and justice, hope and life for all peoples.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Disturb us into awareness of the needs of others.

Forgive us our sins,

Our pride and our prejudices.

As we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation,

Especially keep our hearts and minds open

To see the good in others.

Deliver us from evil.

For the Kingdom,

Just and true

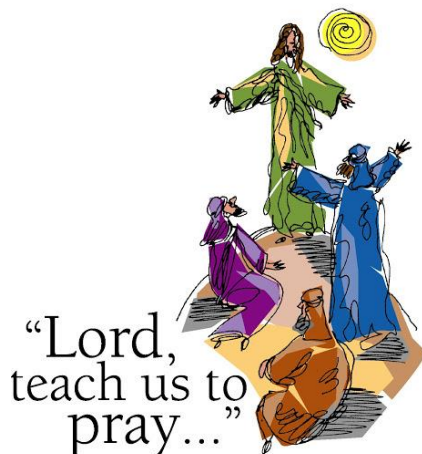
The power,

Gentle and fair,

And the glory,

Visible through the colours of love

Are yours for ever and ever. Amen.



“Lord,
teach us to
pray...”

Resources and acknowledgements:

In His Presence by Denis E Taylor 1973

Introduction to Christian Worship by James F White 2000

www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/learning-pray
www.rejesus.co.uk

www.pray-as-you-go.org

Jesus would often go to some place where he could be alone and pray

Luke 5:16

After the stone had been rolled aside, Jesus looked up toward heaven and prayed, "Father, I thank you for answering my prayer".

John 11:41

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

Luke 23:33-34a