



4 ways to pray

(conspiring, conversational, contemplative, crafted)

.. a companion to the Bear With Me [4 Ways To Pray episode](#)

A 5 Minute All-In-One

Hi God, it's me, _____.

(minute of silence)

I love _____ (name of person or situation I want to pray for).

(minute of silence to get in touch with love for that person/situation).

You love _____ (repeat name).

We agree.

(minute of silence to open to the reality that God does love this person or situation, knows all about it, and that the Spirit is already working in it in some way)

May your will (or love, or goodness, or healing) **be done in their life** (or current situation).

(minute of silence to rest in that request: for goodness, wholeness, or surprising help to prevail in their life/situation)

Here I am...

(couple of seconds of silence to become aware again of myself and my body and the present moment)

Use me.

(minute of silence to give the Spirit access to me - to my time, heart, will, imagination, body, resources, ideas - to try to open as much as I can to the possibility that God may want to use me to be part of the creative "answer" to this person's prayer).

Amen.



Conspiring Prayers

“If someone needs a wheelchair ramp, don’t pray for a ramp. Build one!”

- Jonathan & Shane quoting [John Perkins from the CCDA](#) in *Becoming the Answers to our Prayers*

The Serenity Prayer:

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Amen.

-reinhold niebuhr (1892-1971)

“Here I am. Send me.”

-Isaiah

Inhale: Let my anger tell the truth
Exhale: Let my rage protect the holy.
-Cole Arthur Riley, [Black Liturgies](#)

Guided Intercession (adapted from Ruth Haley Barton)

- Picture a place that brings you comfort and a sense of safety.
- Imagine God sitting in that place with you.
- Just be with God for a few minutes
- Allow God to bring others to our heart and mind – any person or situation that is of concern to you, someone who has asked for your prayers, or a situation that is causing you stress or requires wisdom
- Imagine God asking you, “Is it OK for us to invite this person to join us (or for us to look at this situation together)?”
- If you can say yes, welcome that person into the space where you and God are communing and be with that person, group or situation in God’s presence
- Listen for the prayer (desire, groaning?) that the Holy Spirit is already praying for that person or situation
- Ask God “How can I join you in that prayer?”
- See if there is anything God is inviting you to offer to that person or situation
- Do not force or push anything
- If nothing comes, continue to rest in God relative to that situation
- If wisdom or a next step does come, determine that you will respond faithfully as God makes the way clear



©onversational Prayer Prompts:

“Prayer is shared life with God over an entire lifetime.”
- Roberta Bondi, *To Pray & To Love*

“In prayer we say who in fact we are - not who we should be, nor who we could be,
but who we are. All prayer begins with this confession.”
- Ann and Barry Ulanov

“I believe the most adequate description of prayer is simply,
‘Talking to God about what we are doing together.’”
- Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*

Here are some optional conversation starters with God.
Get in a place where you can talk out loud (even if quietly), and try a few.
See what comes up or out, and don't stress if you can't think of anything,
just focus on being as authentic as possible with God, in the here and now.

1. *Hi, God, it's me, _____ . I am feeling _____...*
 - a. *And I experience (name of feeling) in my body as _____...*
2. *Something you should know about me, God, is _____...*
3. *I've been meaning to say thank you for _____...*
4. *I find myself thinking so much about _____...*
 - a. *And what it stirs in my body is _____...*
5. *If my life right now were a color, place, image, scene, animal or thing, it would be a _____...*
6. *The last thing that really inspired me was _____...*
7. *If there is a season for everything, I'm in a season of _____...*



Contemplative Prayer

I've kept my feet on the ground, I've cultivated a quiet heart.
Like a baby content in its mother's arms, my soul is a baby content.
-Psalmist (131:2, *The Message*)

(Contemplation is) a way out of the great self-centered psychodrama.
- Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land*

For God alone my soul waits in silence.
- Psalm 62

Of you my heart has spoken, "Seek his face."
-Psalm 27:8

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

10 minute Stilling Meditation:

Be still and know that I am God. (2 minutes of silence).

Be still and know that I am. (2 minutes...)

Be still and know. (2 minutes...)

Be still. (2 minutes...).

Be.

Be.

Be.

Be.

Centering Prayer

1. Choose a word as a symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
 - a. Jesus, Let Go, Christ, God, Return, Peace, Thank You, etc.
 - b. This word can serve as a "windshield wiper" - a clearing of what has come up, a cue to return to God's presence and love
2. Set a timer (can start at 5, 10, or 15 minutes)
3. Sit comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce your prayer word as a symbol of your consent to God's presence and action.
4. When you become aware of thoughts, return ever so gently to the word.
5. At the end of the prayer time, remain in silence with eyes closed for another minute, and then close with the Lord's Prayer.

Summary:

Be with God within → use a word to stay → use the word to return



©rafted Prayers

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night,
And give your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend the sick, Lord Christ;
Give rest to the weary,
Bless the dying,
Soothe the suffering,
Pity the afflicted,
Shield the joyous;
All for your love's sake.
Amen.

-a prayer from Compline, *The Divine Office*

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Mother/Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.
-Jesus

Upon hearing birdsong

You draw praise
From the frailest of things.
So also draw praise
From me.

-Every Moment Holy

A Beloved Charter "Holy Experiment" from Trevor Hudson

"Experiment with the creation of your own beloved charter. Look up those verses (+ lyrics, quotes and poetry lines) that are expressive for you of the way God values our lives. Write these down at random. When your list is complete, arrange them into a meaningful personal charter. It need not be lengthy - five or six sentences are sufficient. With time, it may change and develop as different things attract your attention. For the next month, on a daily basis, set aside about 10 minutes to be alone. Picture the risen Christ sitting alongside you, speaking these words to you. Bid the indwelling Spirit to press home the message of your own belovedness... Notice your inner responses and share them with the Holy One." (*Discovering our Spiritual Identity, page 30*)

Rules for Praying*

by Vanessa Caruso

Returning.
Life is never elsewhere.
Lifting the laundry off
the chair and becoming aware
of breathing is risky:
life swells in, then, the
impermanence of all I know
unlatches, like a genie in a bottle
needing fresh air,
acknowledgement.
Praying is as vulnerable as wanting
a child. That's why
this feeling in my stomach—
may be hunger, nausea, worry
or longing. Or all.
I follow warmth and weight
to find my body's open gate
today and stay.
Pull the thread
of my brows taut,
let them fall
like a garage door
over my thinking.
The answer is Yes:
this is a good use of time,
an end in itself.
It is enough to live.
This is not an audition.
I already have the part of
person.

**What would your "rules for praying" be? From experience? And based on what your particular temptations/discouragements/draws to prayer are? Feel free to write your own!*