

As you pray, here are a few key things that will help you:

- **Choose a time.**
Mark 1:35. Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.
- **Select a quiet place, pray privately.**
Matt. 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
- **Pray specifically and succinctly (concise).**
Matt. 6:7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.
- **Have an attitude of expectation.**
Psalm 5:3 In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.
- **Use a journal; write down what God tells you.**
- **Focus on God and not your problem.**
Matt. 6:3. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- **Make prayer your first choice and not your last chance.**
1Thess. 5:16-18 Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- **Let your prayer be filled with praise.**
Psalm 34:1-3 I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.
- **Pray from an attitude of humility.**
Luke 18:9-14 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable; Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself; 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to the heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'
- **Pray for consistency.**
Luke 18:1-8 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary. For some time he refused. But finally, he said to himself, "Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!" And the Lord

said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you; he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes. Will he find faith on the earth?”

- **Be led of the Holy Spirit in your prayer.**

Romans 8:26-27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with the groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

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- **Pray from a burdened and sincere heart.**

PRAYER

What is prayer? What does it mean to pray? In its most basic form, prayer is a conversation with God. It involves both talking and listening. Talking to God and listening for what He has say. Most often God speaks to us through His Word the Bible. The Bible is really His love letter to us. As we read it, we begin to hear His voice. Not necessarily an audible voice but a sense of what He is saying, what He is trying to get us to understand. We can also hear Him as we pray and listen.

“In prayer, real prayer, we begin to think God’s thoughts after Him: to desires, to love the things He loves, progressively we are taught to see things from His point of view.”

Why pray? Prayer changes things. It changes us, circumstances, people, etc. When I am faced with difficulty I pray. Why? Because I believe God acts when we pray. The God of the universe steps into our world and acts. He changes things. God is always at work. When we pray God acts; not always or at least not always in the ways we would like Him to act, but He is involved. Sometimes His answer is yes, sometimes it is no, or even wait. It is not always yes. But the key thing to remember is that God is involved.

Matthew 21:22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.

As we think about our journey of faith, the answer to them is found in God. God has called us to pray. He has said that if we humble ourselves, pray, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways; He will hear us, forgive us and heal our land. **(2Chronicles 7:14)**

In the Bible, Daniel is a good example of someone dedicated to prayer. Read his story in Chapter 6.

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

Psalm 66:18 says, If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. One key step in coming before God is to confess your sin. Basically, you need to get right with God. He already knows who you are and what you have done. So, confession is basically agreeing with Him.

God desires our honesty. Read this portion of King David's prayer of confession.

Psalm 51:1-7 Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner – yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the womb (or from the heart), teaching me wisdom even there. Purify me from my sins, and I will be cleaned; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

So, we begin by being honest.

To be honest, we may need to spend some time in reflection. Often, we repress past occasions of sin or live in denial. So, take a few minutes and ask God to show you any sin in your life. Things you have done wrong or broken relationships.

Using the following checklist as a Guide as you pray. Do you struggle with any of the following:

*Anger	*Unforgiveness toward others	*Jealousy	*Lying
*Bitterness	*Unkind Words	*Pride	*Selfishness
*Immorality	*Unfaithfulness	*Unkind actions	*Lust

If you do struggle with any of these, confess them to God and ask for His forgiveness. Then receive His forgiveness. This is the wonderful thing about being a Christian, we are forgiven.

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

Next, if you realize you have offended someone, go to them and ask for forgiveness and seek reconciliation.

Matthew 5:23-24 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.