

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME WITH GOD

A RESOURCE OF Q4 IMPACT



Communing with God throughout the day is our greatest privilege...and our greatest need. Yet developing a regular habit of personal prayer and devotions can be one of our greatest challenges. Please consider the following practical ideas for establishing a personal habit of daily prayer and devotion.

Where Do I Start?

Matthew 6:6 *“But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”*

Even before you decide the specific place and time for praying, stop and consider that it is your heavenly Father - the Creator of heaven and earth and the One who both loves you and knows you intimately - with whom you are meeting. In reverence of Him, set aside a time and a place where you will not be distracted.

Is There a Helpful Structure for Prayer?

Jesus gives us the structure for prayer in Matthew 6:9-13, when he tells us to “Pray then like this:”

Our Father in heaven,

Our prayers should begin with adoration and reflection on who God is. It is through the Son’s sacrificial death and resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit that we can now cry, “Abba Father”. We have been adopted into the Family of God and invited into intimate fellowship with the Father. We have also been invited to participate with the Father’s “new creation” project through prayer, worship, and service.

Hallowed be your name.

Hallowing, or honoring the Father’s name as holy, allows us to both acknowledge His supreme majesty and to gratefully acknowledge our vital need for Him. So don’t rush through this portion of the Lord’s Prayer. Spend time reflecting on and proclaiming the Father’s holiness, goodness, love, and power.

Your kingdom come,

Prayer should not be merely bringing our “wish list” to God. Our highest concern must be for His plan and purposes to be established...not our own. Here we acknowledge that His kingdom has already been launched in the person of His Son and the giving of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, we pray for continued “in-breaking” of God’s kingdom in our hurting world and for the fullness of God’s rule when Jesus returns.

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

Our prayers and intercessions should be offered for the needs of today but with grateful confidence that God’s purposes for all of creation will one day be accomplished. With this phrase, we should each offer ourselves afresh to God, asking to be led and empowered by His Spirit. It is proper to also bring intercessions for our loved ones, our church leadership, our political leaders, and the needs of our communities and our world.

Give us this day our daily bread,

God graciously invites us to ask for our daily needs and for the needs of others. Keep in mind that this portion of the Prayer is for God’s provision for “this day”. As such, we express our need and our thanks for God’s daily care. Also note that we are not prompted to pray for “our daily filet mignon”. Rather, we are to be deeply grateful for the Father’s material provision as well as for the “spiritual food” that he provides daily.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

We humbly ask God to forgive us as we are committed to forgiving the wrongs that others have done to us. We are to be imitators of our Father who lovingly forgives our sins. This does not mean that we should not protect ourselves or loved ones from abuse. Forgiveness does mean that we relinquish our right to vindictive retribution, giving final judgement to God – and praying for our debtor’s highest good.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Being aware that we are easily distracted into wrong thoughts and actions, we pray to walk closely and intimately with God throughout the day.

How Much Time Should I Take To Pray?

Prayer and Scripture reading is our privilege and our God-given call. As such, we should set aside enough time to truly honor God, reflect on His glory, nourish our hearts and minds on His Word, and offer our prayers and intercessions. Our prayer time should not be like a “sip and run” breakfast. With that said, whether you’re able to spend ten minutes or ten hours in prayer, it should be reverential, humble, and thankful.

Remember that Paul urges us to “pray without ceasing”. Beginning the day in sincere prayer and feasting on God’s word should prompt us to reflect on God’s grace throughout the day.

Are There Topics Requiring Daily Prayer?

Many find it helpful to keep a list of topics and loved one’s specific needs. You may wish to list these in a journal and record God’s answers to these prayers. Some of the topics to be considered are:

- Your church’s pastor(s) and teachers
- The larger Body of Christ within your community and the rest of the world
- The President and leaders in government
- Your family members, both saved and unsaved
- Your neighbors
- Those who are sick, dying, or in difficult circumstances
- The poor and marginalized within your community
- Those in the military, law enforcement, teaching professions, and the healthcare services
- Missionaries serving abroad and in home missions
- Those around the world suffering from disasters and violence
- Personal needs

Resources For Prayer and Scripture Meditation

Christians throughout the centuries have utilized various practical guides for prayer and Scripture meditation. You may wish to consider the following:

- 1. A daily Bible reading plan.** Various “one-year Bible” plans are available in print and in online formats. [The Bible Project App](#) [You Version Bible App](#) [The Five Day Bible Reading Plan](#)
- 2. A daily devotional with associated Scripture passages.** *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers or *New Morning Mercies* by Paul David Tripp are highly recommended.
- 3. The Book of Common Prayer.** While created by Protestant Anglicans, the Book of Common Pray has been used by many Evangelicals over the centuries as a valuable guide to prayer and Scripture meditation. A free online version, *The Daily Office*, is available as an app for smartphones.
- 4. In-depth study of specific books of the Bible.** Prayerfully and carefully study individual books of the Bible. The NavPress’s *Life Change Series* or N. T. Wright’s “*For Everyone*” series are excellent companion resources to consider. Many study Bibles also include valuable introductory and commentary materials.