



SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

Prayer Using Images and Symbols

For centuries Christians have used the senses to remind themselves of the God who created them. Nature and art can speak to our senses of God's presence. Candles, crosses and holy images can help us to see God in a new way and to experience what they remind us of; they can also be used as a focus for our meditation or contemplation.

'Work and Prayer' - St Benedict

Any repetitive or mundane task has the potential to elicit, or become, prayer. Whether praying under one's breath as the job is being done, or by offering yourself and the task for God's greater glory, one can begin to live out the words of St Paul and his desire to see Christians pray always.

Meditation

This can involve placing oneself in an event from scripture by assuming the person of one of the characters. You experience the event in your imagination as if you were there, reacting to it as it happens. You then see how that experience might help you to understand what Jesus was teaching, or maybe God has spoken to you in a new way about a biblical story or parable.

Lectio Divina

Choose a piece of scripture and read it slowly three times. Pick out the word, words or phrase that speaks to you the most and prayerfully repeat it, listening to what God might be saying to you through it. Allow the word or phrase to guide you in your prayer and think about how you might apply it to your own life in the day or week ahead.

Praying the Psalms

Choose one or two psalms and, instead of making a study of them, pray the psalm by entering into the thoughts, experiences and trials that the Psalmist is addressing to God through their words and prayers.

Contemplation

One of the aims of contemplation is to simply be in presence of God, as one might with a friend. It is often accompanied by a conscious stilling of our mind and body, which can help us to become aware of God's quiet presence. The repetition of a particular word or phrase (see "The Jesus Prayer"), or concentrating on our posture or breathing, can help to remove distractions so that we can focus solely on Him.

'Physical' Prayer

This is the practice of using the physical (our bodies) to express the spiritual. A very simple example would be the style of prayer standing with arms out-stretched in the shape of a cross while you pray. The traditional posture of a Jew or early Christian at prayer was, in actual fact, standing and not sitting, with palms raised toward heaven. Try different postures - sitting (with back straight), kneeling or lying prostrate - each one can 'become' a prayer, or a focus or aid to prayer.

Suggested Scripture Passages for Prayer

God's Love

Lk 11:1-13 Lord teach us to pray
Ps 139:1-18 You search & know me
Is 53:1-3 Come to the Water
Is 43:1-7 You are precious in my eyes
Rom 8:31-39 With God on our side
Dt 1:29-33 Do not be afraid
Ps 131 Like a weaned child
Is 49:14-16 I will never forget you
Hos 11:1-9 When Israel was a child,
I loved him
Ps 145 God acts only out of love
Jn 1.35-39 What do you want?

Trust

Ps 46 God is our shelter, our strength
Mt 6:24-34 Do not worry
Mt 14:22-33 Walking on the water
Mk 4:35-41 Calming of the Storm
Lk 1:26-38 Annunciation
Lk 21:1-4 The Widow's Mite
Jn 15:1-8 Apart from me you can do nothing
Jer 18:1-6 The Potter
Ez 34:11-16 I will look after my sheep myself
Phil 4:8-13 I can do all things in Him
Ps 27 God is my light and my salvation
Ps 71 In you I take shelter
Ps 37:1-7 Trust in the Lord

Healing, Forgiveness

Ez 36 25-29 I shall pour clean water over you
Mk 10:46-52 The blind man
Lk 5:12-16 Cure of the leper
Mk 2:1-12 Cure of the paralytic
Mk 5:21-24, 35-43 Jairus' daughter
Mk 5:25-34 Woman with the hemorrhage
Lk 15:11-32 Lost son and loving father
Jn 5:1-9 The man at the pool of Bethesda
1Kg 19:1-8 Elijah: Take my life

Intimacy with Christ

Lk 1:26-38 Annunciation
Lk 1:39-45 Visitation
Lk 2:1-20 Birth
Lk 2:22-38 Presentation
Lk 2:39-40 & 51-52 Hidden life
Lk 2:41-50 Finding Jesus in the temple
Mt 3:13-17 Jesus leaves home – Baptism
Mt 4.1-11 Temptations
Lk 4:14-30 Return to Nazareth
Lk 5:1-11 Call of the disciples
Jn 2:1-12 Cana Miracle
Jn 4:1-42 Woman at the well
Mt 14:22-25 Jesus prays alone
Lk 10:38-42 Jesus with Martha and Mary
Jn 11:1-45 Raising of Lazarus
Mt 21:1-17 Jesus enters Jerusalem
Mt 26:6-10 Supper at Bethany – anointing of Jesus
Jn 13:1-16 Last Supper and washing of the feet
Lk 22:39-46 Agony in the garden
Eph 6:10-20 Put on God's armour
Jn 19:17-30 Crucifixion

Resurrection

Mk 16:1-8 Jesus appears to the women at the tomb
Jn 20:11-18 Jesus meets Mary Magdalen
Lk 24:13-35 Road to Emmaus
Jn 20:19-22 Peace be with you
Jn 21:1-19 Sea of Tiberias
Phil 1:3-11 I thank my God whenever I think of you
Phil 4:4-9 I want you to be happy

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The Jesus Prayer

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Repeat).