



PRAYING AT HOME

SOME SUGGESTIONS

Contents

Introduction	2
Simple Forms of Prayer	3
Some Collects and Other Prayers To Say	7
A Form of Prayer During the Day	10
An Act of Spiritual Communion	13
Creative Ways of Praying	15
Some Online Resources	15-16
A Finger Labyrinth	16-17

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Adapted in part from North Wakefield Benefice Ministry Team with thanks



Praying at home isn't always easy for many of us, but we hope that this booklet will help you. Be selective, choose whatever suits you best and you may like to try some new ways of praying.

Social distancing and self-isolation can be boring, frustrating, or lonely, and even frightening if you are unwell, although there may be other people in the house with you! God is with us in these situations, whether we are conscious of God's presence or not. Remembering this, and relying on God in prayer, can help you to keep going. And remember there are people in the church who are praying for and with you.

In normal circumstances, we are pleased to arrange for sick or housebound people to have communion at home, but where quarantine/self-isolation rules are in place, sadly this won't be possible. But Common Worship reminds us in its liturgy for the sick that "Believers who cannot physically receive the sacrament are to be assured that they are partakers by faith of the body and blood of Christ and of the benefits he conveys to us by them." Illness – or self-isolation – cannot separate us from Jesus' love.

We hope this booklet will give you some ideas about how to maintain and deepen your faith and your prayers. God wants us to turn to him in all our troubles and perplexities, even if we can't always find the "right words". And remember God knows our needs before we even express them.

All Saints' Ministry Team

Simple Forms of Prayer

- Lighting a candle before you pray can help you to focus and listen *and/or*



- Use a basic breathing exercise
 - Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor and your back supported by the chair. Close your eyes.
 - Become aware of the sensations in your body at this moment ... Be aware of the touch of your clothes on your shoulders ... on your back... your back touching the chair... your hands on your lap... become aware of your thighs touching the chair... become conscious of your feet touching your shoes... now become aware of your posture ... repeat this pattern for a while...
 - Now become aware of your breathing. Become aware of the air as it passes through your nostrils, nothing else... don't attempt to alter your breathing, if it is shallow leave it that way, just observe it. Feel its touch. Notice which part of the nostrils you feel the touch as you breathe in.... and what part of your nostrils you feel the touch as you breathe out. If you can, become aware of the coldness or the warmth as you breathe in and out... you may also notice that the quantity of air passing through each nostril is different... be sensitive and alert to the lightest touch of the air as you breathe....
 - As you breathe in, be conscious of God's Spirit entering your whole being... fill your lungs with the divine energy God brings... As you breathe out, imagine you are breathing out all the impurities... fears... negative feelings... imagine your whole body radiant and filled with Gods life-giving Spirit... stay with this awareness... if distractions come, return gently to the awareness of the act of breathing, of the air passing through the nostrils.

- Jesus taught us the Lord's Prayer so that we would always have words to say. Let's use it daily!



Traditional

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Contemporary

Our 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 for ever.
Amen.



- Reviewing the day (also known as the *Examen*).

This is a very simple way to think about your day with God in five steps:

- Become aware of God's presence, or ask God to help you remember he's there with you.
- Review the day with gratitude (as best you can, maybe starting with small things!)
- Pay attention to how you're feeling about it.
- Choose one feature of the day and pray about it.
- Look toward tomorrow. What do you expect the day to hold? Ask God to help you remember he's with you.



- Lectio Divina (sacred reading)

Again, if this is new to you, don't let the name put you off. Lectio helps you to read the Bible in a prayerful way.

- Pick a short passage of Scripture (it can be anything you like, but if you're stuck, parables of Jesus or the shorter Psalms are a good choice).
- Read it through, slowly, two or three times.
- Notice what jumps out at you, and ask yourself, what is God saying to me here?
- Reflect on this for a few minutes.
- Then, read the passage again. Now ask yourself, what do I want to say to God? - then say it. (It's OK to be angry with God. The writers of the Psalms frequently were.)
- Lastly, sit quietly and know that God is present with you.



Some Collects and Other Prayers to Say

Sovereign God,
the defence of those who trust in you
and the strength of those who suffer:
look with mercy on our affliction
and deliver us through our mighty Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Lord God, whose Son, Jesus Christ,
understood people's fear and pain
before they spoke of them,
we pray for those in hospital or sick at home;
surround the frightened with your tenderness;
give strength to those in pain;
hold the weak in your arms of love,
and give hope and patience
to those who are recovering;
we ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

A prayer of confession:

Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



The collect for purity/ prayer of preparation:

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at mine end, and at my departing.
Amen





Prayers before sleeping:

Be present, O merciful God,
and protect us through the silent hours of this night,
so that we who are wearied
by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,
may rest upon your eternal changelessness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Abide with us, Lord, for it is evening,
and day is drawing to a close.
Abide with us and with your whole Church,
in the evening of the day,
in the evening of life,
in the evening of the world;
abide with us and with all your faithful ones, O Lord,
in time and in eternity. Amen.

(Source: Common Worship/ The Church of England Liturgical Commission)

Sometimes sitting in silence can be a powerful way to pray, maybe focus on a candle or a favourite picture. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.

A Form of Prayer to use during the Day

This is a form of prayer, sometimes called an 'office', which you can use on its own, or use to expand your daily 'quiet time' with the Bible. If you are doing the latter, then replace the suggested readings with the ones your Bible notes/plan suggest. You might also choose to use the "Daily Eucharistic Lectionary" readings, or the readings for Morning or Evening Prayer, which are available online (<http://almanac.oremus.org>). You should always say a Psalm, but you could use a different scheme.

When saying this office alone, say both the parts in plain and in bold.

God, make speed to save us.

Lord, make haste to help us.

My heart tells of your word, 'Seek my face.'

Your face, Lord, will I seek.

Praise - you could sing a hymn, listen to music, or say

We praise you, O God,
we acclaim you as the Lord;
all creation worships you,
the Father everlasting.

To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
the cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Read a Psalm (see table)

End the Psalm with:

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Bible Reading, eg

Sunday: Revelation 21.1-4, Monday: Isaiah 49.1b-4, Tuesday: Deuteronomy 28.1-6, Wednesday: Matthew 9.35-end, Thursday: John 17.18-23, Friday: Luke 9.22-25, Saturday: John 11.17–26a.

Intercessions: pray for the Church, the world, and for individuals.

This, or another collect is said:

Lord our God,
grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart;
that so desiring, we may seek and find you;
and so finding, may love you;
and so loving, may hate those sins from which you have delivered us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said.

Our 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 for ever.
Amen.

or

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

May God who made both heaven and earth bless us. **Amen.**

A fortnight's cycle of Psalms

Sunday	119.1-32
Monday	119.33-56
Tuesday	119.57-80
Wednesday	119.81-104
Thursday	119.105-128
Friday	119.129-152
Saturday	119.153-end

Sunday	121, 122
Monday	123, 124
Tuesday	125, 126
Wednesday	127
Thursday	128
Friday	129, 130
Saturday	131, 133

Common Worship: Daily Prayer - Prayer During the Day (adapted).

Some More Bible Passages To Read

Psalm 23	Jeremiah 29.11-13
Psalm 27	Psalm 139
Isaiah 43.1-21	Habbakuk 3.17-19
Matthew 6.25-34	Matthew 11.25-29
John 14.1-7	John 17:1-26
Romans 8.18-38	Colossians 3.12-17
Philippians 4.1-13	1 Corinthians 13

A Prayer for Assurance of Christ's Presence ("An Act of Spiritual Communion").

Begin with the Collect for Purity and then read the Gospel for Sunday, or another appropriate passage of Scripture (e.g. John 14: 1-7).

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Examine your heart and confess your sins to God, using your own words or this prayer of confession,

Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

and then say

The Almighty and merciful Lord, grant me pardon and absolution of all my sins.
Amen.

Then say

Lord, you stand at the door of my heart and knock.

You wait for me and only I can let you in.

I believe and trust in you and ask you now
to fill me with presence.

Feed me with your body
and unite me in your blood,
that I may be your blessing
to a world in need.

Amen.

(from the Service live streamed from Christ Church Cathedral on 22 March 2020)

or

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving. I present to you my soul and body with the earnest wish that I may always be united to you. And since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to you, and embrace you with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate you from me. May I live and die in your love. Amen.

You might like to sit in silence for a while. Finish your time of prayer by saying the Lord's Prayer.

(“The Armed Forces Prayer book” (The Episcopal Church USA), 1951, adapted).

Creative Ways of Praying

You might find it helpful to listen to favourite hymns or worship songs, or other pieces of music that have a special meaning for you.

Pictures can help prompt our prayers - for instance photos of loved ones, maps or pictures of our community or the wider world

If the news is getting you down, try praying for the people and situations that are mentioned.

Why not try doodling, painting, or drawing as you pray?

Online Resources

You can find services of Morning, Midday, Evening, and Night Prayer from the Church of England online at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-daily-prayer>, arranged for you with the readings of the day. There is also an app you can download to your smartphone or tablet (follow the link on the web page or search for “daily prayer” in your app store and look for the blue and white logo). Choose whether to pray in modern language, or to use the Book of Common Prayer.

“Prayer During the Day” is the shortest and simplest of the services, morning and evening prayer have the longest portions of Scripture.

An Ordinary Office: <http://anordinaryoffice.org.uk/>. “An Ordinary Office” is designed to be very accessible (you can follow it through text, symbol, audio, or video). Easy to pray if you’re unwell or very tired. Morning, midday, and evening prayer, plus “nocturnes” for those who can’t sleep.

The Northumbria Community:

<https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/offices/how-to-use-daily-office/>.

Short but poetic forms of daily prayer in the “Celtic” style.

Pray As You Go: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>. A short (11-12 minutes) daily act of prayer and worship, available online or as a tablet and smartphone app (search for “pray as you go” in your app store and look for the headphone logo). This easy to use, beautifully produced site uses music and pictures to help you pray and reflect with a passage of Scripture. Follows the Roman Catholic calendar, but widely used by Christians of all traditions. There are also special seasonal meditations.

Word Live:

<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/living-faith>. Daily Bible study and prayer points from Scripture Union. Linked to a Facebook group where you can share your thoughts and prayers with other Christians.

A Prayer Labyrinth

A labyrinth differs from a maze in that there is only one way to the centre and you retrace your steps on the way out. Labyrinths are usually outdoors.

You might find it helpful to ‘walk’ the labyrinth by using this finger labyrinth.

Notice your feelings as you ‘enter’ the labyrinth. ‘Walk’ slowly and prayerfully and take some time to reflect when you reach the as you ‘walk’, as you reach the centre and as you leave. Do you notice any changes?

Finally thank God for what has been shown you.

