

# How to Pray

**Q: Why is praying so hard? It seems that every time I sincerely try to pray, distractions come, and I lose heart.**

**A:** From the writings of the Rev. Billy Graham

*For many people prayer isn't a joy but a burden. When they fail to pray, they feel guilty; when they do pray, they worry that they might not be doing it correctly. Or disruptions break in and steal the time away. Or their prayers are wooden and lifeless, perhaps only repeating words learned in childhood but never engaging their minds or hearts. But this is the opposite of what prayer should be. Prayer shouldn't be a burden but a privilege—a privilege God has graciously given us because He enjoys fellowship with His saints. Remember: Jesus Christ died to destroy the barrier of sin that separates us from God, and when we give our lives to Him, we have a personal relationship with Almighty God.*

*But central to any relationship is communication. It's true on a human level; what kind of relationship do two people have who never talk with each other? In a far greater way, our relationship with God involves communication—not just an occasional brief chat, but a deep sharing of ourselves and our concerns with God. Because Christ has opened Heaven's door for us, the Bible says, we should "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).*

*Prayer is simply talking to God and God speaks with us through His Word. Both are essential—and both are gifts God has given us so we can know Him. Prayer is a gift from God's hand just as much as the Bible. Imagine being able to talk to the Creator and the King of glory. Time for prayer should be paramount to our daily lives.*

Are you struggling to pray? If so, you are not actually alone. Prayerlessness is a common struggle among Christians.

Despite the importance of prayer, known to many Christians, they still find themselves struggling to pray consistently.

If someone asks you to pray do you feel confident about what to say? How often are you praying? Do you get distracted or just find it's hard to find the words.

There are many reasons why prayer can be hard. Knowing how to pray is the first step. Here are 8 steps to help you with prayer.

**1. Make it personal.**

Prayer is more than a transaction. There is a person on the other side of the dialog. When you start your prayer, let God know you are here for Him. The goal of prayer is God! We shouldn't be praying to get something from God but to get God. To meet with God. Make it personal. Talk to Him.

**2. Lead with praise.**

Remember who God is and praise Him. Tell Him what you appreciate about Him. Tell Him what you love about Him. Let praise lead the way. You could start with something like, "I just want You because You are amazing."

**3. Align with His plans.**

Ask God to let His will be done here on earth like it is in heaven. Find out what God's will is, where he is at, join Him and put your effort there. He's going to do His work with or without us so make yourself a part of it. But how do you find what He is doing? You get with God! Ask Him to help you. Something like this: "God I'm here with you. Show me your plan for today and show me how I can assist with it."

**4. Ask God for what you need.**

God knows what your needs are and He is always providing for us even when we don't ask. We never have to stress about the need part because God has everything we need, and He will provide. But God has invited us to ask Him and He wants us to come to Him with everything. Tell God, "Thank you that You provide all my needs through Your will," then you can also ask Him for something you need or help with something. Maybe patience for the day. You could even ask for healing for someone that is sick.

**5. Clear the air.**

God knows everything. You can't tell Him one thing while thinking another because He already knows how you feel. We need to confess our sins before God. Thank Him that His grace is good. Ask Him for help to work on areas you need help with and to change in you what needs changed. If you need to mend a relationship, ask God for help. If you have wronged someone or said something you shouldn't have, go make amends. We are going to leave prayer with a to-do list.

**6. Acquaint yourself with His Word and commit it to prayer.**

Read your Bible. God speaks His Word through the Bible. Have your Bible with you when you pray and ask God to help you understand His Word. Focus on the truth that God is your refuge and strength. He is your ever present when you are in trouble. Let that calm you. The Word is mighty!

**7. Don't be afraid of the silence.**

Sometimes you may not know what to say. It's ok to pause and be still. Quietness with God is good. A good prayer during a time like this would be, "I don't know what to say next God, but I've got some time, and I just need you."

**8. Be grateful.**

Always be grateful even when you don't feel like it. There are times in our life when everything seems to be going wrong and we can't see anything to be grateful for. Choose to praise Him always because He deserves it. Your mood will change as you praise! There is always something to be thankful for. When you are having trouble thank God that He hears you and that He knows you.

Prayer is communicating with God. Learning how to pray is really about developing a relationship with God. That can mean thanking Him, praising Him, confessing something you've done wrong or expressing a need you have. It can mean talking to Him as you would to a friend.

*"Never stop praying." (1 Thessalonians 5:17)*

Talking to God isn't limited to your formal, scheduled prayer time. You can live in constant communication with God throughout your day. Even if it's a thirty-second prayer. Even if it's a prayer you pray in your heart instead of out loud. Talk to God about things as they come up in your day.

Remember that God lives in you through the Holy Spirit, and you can talk to Him and He can talk to you all the time.