

Tips for Growing in Devotion to God Through Prayer

1. Remember that God DELIGHTS to commune with you in prayer!

- a. Paul said none of us really know how to pray - relax!
- b. Like a parent with their toddler, God is not looking for reasons to judge your prayer, but rather delights in your stammering attempts to talk with Him!
- c. Don't wait until you know how to pray better - just begin praying, and you will grow just as a child learns to talk!

2. Learn by joining in the prayers in our corporate worship

- a. The original meaning of Acts 2:42 is corporate worship: this is where we learn to pray!
- b. You can learn rhythms and practices of prayer from other believers.
- c. Join in as others pray, letting a deep felt "Amen" arise from your heart through your lips.
- d. Don't simply listen to others sing - join in as we worship and pray to God in song! Remember that the book of Psalms is both the prayer and the song book of the Bible - for prayer is sung as well as spoken!

3. Begin private prayer with worship music

- a. The book of Psalms was the heart and soul of the prayer life of the early church (a practice carried over from synagogue worship) - and they usually learned it by singing it as part of corporate worship.
- b. Many worship songs are prayers, and they can prime your heart to move into spoken prayers.

4. Pray Scripture

- a. Use the Psalms, the Lord's Prayer, the prayers of Paul, and the prayer songs in the book of Revelation as part of your prayer life. You can literally just pray these prayers as part of your own prayer time with God.
- b. Use prayers recorded in the Scripture to begin and form your prayer time. For example, if you begin your prayer time by praying Psalm 1, let its words then guide your prayers for yourself and others, asking God to give us a delight in His Word, to speak to us as we meditate on the Word, and for God to help us walk in the ways of righteousness and not follow the crowd in doing evil. You can do the same thing with the Lord's Prayer, focusing on each part of the Lord's Prayer on different days.

5. Use the ACTS model to guide your prayer

- a. **A** - Adoration. I begin my time of prayer by praising God for Who He is, what He is like (perhaps using Scripture to praise God for His attributes like Sovereignty, holiness, loving, faithful, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present, etc.)
- b. **C** - Confession. In this section, I confess my sins. This can include a general confession of my sin, as well as specific sins for which I want forgiveness.
- c. **T** - Thanksgiving. In this section, I give God thanks for things He has done for me. This will include things like forgiving my sins that I just confessed, saving me, providing for me, answers to prayers, and the many blessings God has given me or others.
- d. **S** - Supplication. In this final section, I lay out specific requests for myself or others. This might include asking for guidance, requesting help in fighting temptation, financial needs, praying for healing for myself or others, asking God to work in broken relationships or situations, or any other needs I want to ask God to graciously meet.

6. Include both structure and spontaneity

a. Structure

1. **A set time of prayer.** In Scripture, we see many examples of people having set times of prayer. For example, in Acts 3:1 we read “Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.” We should have a set time on weekdays when we pray. For some, this will be shortly after waking and reading Scripture. For others, it may be during the morning or evening commute, or shortly before bed. Pick a time (or a couple of times) when you are awake and alert and have limited distractions.
2. **Specific items to pray for during my set time of prayer.** Many people have found using a prayer journal, lit, or app helpful to give specific people or items for which to pray. I use the free prayer app “Prayer Mate” to organize the people or things I want to pray for regularly. This includes family, the people of BRCC, missions, and temporary things I am praying for.

b. Spontaneity

1. **Spontaneous prayers.** Scripture also gives examples of spontaneous prayers, such as when Nehemiah offered a quick prayer when asked a question by the King (Nehemiah 1:11). In fact, Paul gives the command “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This does not mean that we sit in a corner praying all day, but rather that built on the foundation of a structured, set time of prayer, our whole life becomes a continuing conversation with God as we move through our daily tasks.
2. Spontaneous people, situations, and things to pray for. In addition to the items in a prayer list or app, we can pray for things that have spontaneously arisen in our day, or for ongoing items that we are asking God to work in during a particular season.