

# Prayer

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Prayer is a conversation between you and God. Developing the habit of prayer assists us in living in connection and relationship with God. Prayer is a habit because it only comes naturally as we practice it. What a gift it is that God desires a real relationship with us and in prayer we are able to rediscover and claim God's love and promises for our lives.

As you prepare yourself for prayer today, remember that Jesus meets us where we are. God loves us as we are. And even before your prayers are on your lips, God is waiting to hear them, ready to meet with you.

*What are your strongest memories of prayer?*

**Daily Prayer:** "You are not an accident. God has created you with purpose. Every day, God gives to each human being the very same treasure no matter what his or her circumstances might be — 24 hours to spend in living .... Daily prayer opens us to God's guiding and to discovering our inner purpose. Daily prayer is a wonderful spiritual tool that becomes a way of life."

*One possible pattern for daily prayer:*

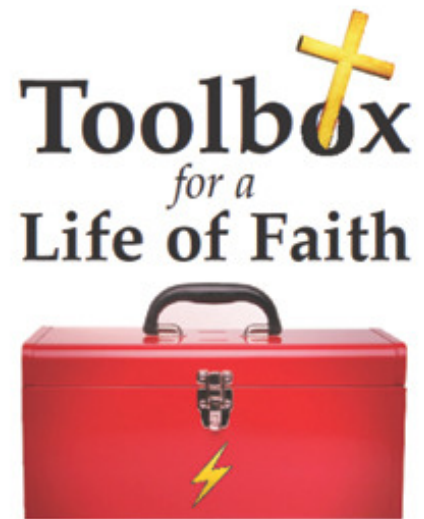
1. *Pick your best time.*
2. *Expect that God will meet you, and trust that God will bless this time.*
3. *Begin the prayer as if talking to a best friend.*
4. *Give thanks to God for the blessings in your life.*
5. *Talk about your mistakes or shortcomings and thank God for grace and forgiveness.*
6. *Share those things that are most important to you.*
7. *Pray for others by name.*
8. *Sit in silence and listen to God.*

**Continuous Prayer** is a way of living in the presence of God. The practice of continuous prayer is based upon this simple awareness: "Whether I am conscious of God's presence or not, God is always near. So whatever I do can be done, not only in his presence, but as a prayer."

## **Practicing Continuous Prayer:**

1. Take time at the beginning of the day to give the day and all its activities in advance to God.
2. During the day, remind yourself that you have asked Jesus to walk with you through the day. Visual cues, like a dot on your watch, can be helpful reminders.
3. Whenever appropriate, take a moment to begin or continue your conversation with the Savior over what is happening or what has happened.

**Persistent Prayer:** "There are times when God lays something on our hearts that we cannot easily dismiss. At such times God requests us to begin persistent prayer .... We may feel an inner urge to pray for (someone). At first we might dismiss it as a random thought combined with an



inner need to make purpose out of it. Sometimes that is exactly what it is! When the name and the inner insistence refuse to go away and, instead become even more prevalent, it can be God calling on us to intercede on behalf of someone else .... Persistent prayer connects us to others for their sakes, not our own. The power of persistent prayer is that it is an exercise in faith – in trusting that God knows what needs to be done and that your response is simply to pray. *Have you ever experienced the sudden need to pray for someone? Did you pray? Why or why not?*

**The Lord's Prayer:** Pray the Lord's Prayer slowly. Pray the Lord's Prayer again, stopping after each petition to focus on the words of this familiar prayer. Try weaving your personal hopes and needs into each phrase. Of course we do not know exactly how prayer works. We only know that the One who hears our prayers has chosen to respond. Prayer opens us to the presence of God. Once our souls are open to God, then God begins to change how we see and experience the world." *So now what?*

1. *Pick one of these prayer forms that you already do well and work to strengthen that part of your life of faith.*
2. *Pick one of these prayer forms that touches your heart and add that to your life of faith.*
3. *Don't hesitate to ask for help from a spouse, friend, spiritual mentor or pastor.*
4. *Don't worry about knowing the right words or form, simply talk to God in prayer and be open to God's presence in your prayer life.*

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Based on "Real Faith for Real Life" by Michael Foss, Augsburg Fortress, 2004.