

What is prayer?

Prayer is turning the heart toward God. When a person prays, he enters into a living relationship with God. [2558–2565] Prayer is the great gate leading into faith. Someone who prays no longer lives on his own, for himself, and by his own strength. He knows there is a God to whom he can talk. People who pray entrust themselves more and more to God. Even now they seek union with the one whom they will encounter one day face to face. Therefore, the effort to pray daily is part of Christian life. Of course, one cannot learn to pray in the same way one learns a technique. As strange as it sounds, prayer is a gift one obtains through prayer.

Four kinds of prayer.

Prayer of Blessing and Adoration

In this prayer we express praise and honor to God. We praise God for giving us life, for the wonder and beauty of our world, and for all the many blessings we enjoy. We open ourselves up to praise God for all the wonders of creation. This form of prayer encourages bodily expression, such as standing with arms raised or dancing.

Prayer of Petition

This is probably the most familiar prayer form of prayer. We are often taught to ask God for the things we need, but asking and praying for them are not necessarily the same. When we pray our petitions, we are asking God, who loves us very much, for something that we believe is good—for ourselves or for others. By using this form of prayer we are mindful of the needs of others as well as of our own needs. We are aware that God wants us to bring our problems and worries to prayer knowing that he will always hear and answer those prayers. God may answer our prayers in a different way and in a different timeframe than we are seeking but God will always give us what we need.

Prayers of petition serve to remind us that God expects us to care for one another and for all his creation. We can pray about the ordinary experiences of life—for people who are sick, for someone who needs a job, for help in our school work, for a safe trip. We pray for peace in our families and in our world. We can also express our sorrow and contrition to God in our prayer.

Prayer of Intercession

This form of prayer is prayer on behalf of others. This form of prayer can be a source of blessing upon others, the Church, and our world. Because we know that Our Lady and the saints intercede for us before God, the Church encourages us to

pray to them for their intercession. Such prayer can bring us great strength and courage and also great peace of mind and heart.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

This form of prayer helps us to be grateful for God's many blessings, spiritual and temporal, and helps us to recognize and appreciate all the good things God gives to us. Reserving some time to praise and thank God for his gifts—the gift of life; the gift of our families and friends; the gift of food, clothing, and shelter; and the numerous other gifts we often take for granted—helps us to form a true spirit of gratitude.

Tips for praying:

- Find a quiet place and time. Prayer can be done anywhere but it is good to have a place that is conducive to relaxing and focusing our attention on God. Finding a regular time to pray each day can also be helpful to making prayer an important daily routine.
- Calm yourself and put away distractions. It is important to be relaxed when we pray by finding a comfortable posture.
- Use formal prayers or speak what you feel to God, or a combination of each. It is important to note that there are different ways to pray. Experiment with styles and forms of prayer. Prayer is an ongoing, developing relationship with God.
- Take time to listen. God does speak to us in prayer but we need to listen with our hearts. Be open to what God is telling you rather than just on what you want to or expect to hear.
- Use the Bible in your prayer
- Keep a journal of prayer
- Have a proper attitude. Prayer requires openness to God and a desire to worship and get to know God better.



Pray like a pirate! *ARRR*

Acknowledge: Openly and honestly, without prejudice, acknowledge how you are before God. What are you experiencing? What is moving in your heart?

Relate: Bring yourself as you are into relationship with God by relating your experience to Him. Speak to him from your heart.

Receive: Listen to what God is doing with the movements of your heart. Receive his presence and the constancy of his love.

Respond: What we receive impels us to respond in gratitude and with renewed heart or make a change in life.