

"For I know well the plans I have in mind for you- says the Lord. Plans for your welfare and not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, and come to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek for me with all your heart, you will find me with you." Jeremiah 29: 11-13

PRAYER - 7 Things Happen When We Pray

1. God hears your prayer. Every time you pray, God is listening. Think about how amazing that is!!
2. Time slows down. Prayer has the amazing power of making your world slow down. When life is moving too fast, spend some time in prayer.
3. You grow closer to Christ. Prayer is your direct link to God. Talking to Him makes you more attune to His purpose for your life!
4. You help others. Praying for others, especially in their presence, can be an amazing encouragement. They will know your love as well as the love of God!
5. Your burden is lifted. Praying about your troubles will ease your load! God is eager to take on your burden and love you the entire way!
6. You commune with the saints. When you pray you are joining with all Christians past and present, lifting your voices to God in perfect harmony!
7. You worship. Praying to God is an act of worship. In prayer you are praising Him for all that He has done and is yet to do. Praise God!

Contemplative prayer is love, silence, listening, and being in the presence of God. [2709-2719, 2724]

For interior prayer one needs time, resolve, and above all a pure heart. It is the humble, poor devotion of a creature that drops all masks, believes in love, and seeks God from the heart. Interior prayer is often called the prayer of the heart and → CONTEMPLATION. → 463

504 What can a Christian accomplish through meditation?

In → MEDITATION a Christian seeks silence so as to experience intimacy with God and to find peace in his presence. He hopes for the sensible experience of his presence, which is an undeserved gift of grace; he does not expect it, however, as the product of a particular technique of meditation.

→ MEDITATION can be an important aid to faith that strengthens and matures the human person. Nevertheless, techniques of meditation that promise to bring about an experience of God, or even the soul's union with God, are deceptive. On account of such false promises, many people believe that God has abandoned them just because they do not perceive him. But God cannot be compelled to show up by particular methods. He communicates himself to us whenever and however he wishes.

505 Why is prayer sometimes a struggle?

The spiritual masters of all times have described growth in faith and in love for God as a spiritual, life-and-death combat. The battlefield is man's interior life. The Christian's weapon is prayer. We can allow ourselves be defeated by our selfishness and lose ourselves over worthless things — or we can win God. [2725-2752]

Often someone who wants to pray must first conquer his lack of will power. Even the Desert Fathers were

acquainted with spiritual sluggishness ("acedia"). Reluctance to seek God is a big problem in the spiritual life. The spirit of the times sees no point in praying, and our full calendars leave no room for it. Then there is the battle against the tempter, who will try anything to keep a person from devoting himself to God. If God did not want us to find our way to him in prayer, we would not win the battle.

Keep your soul in peace. Let God work in you. Welcome thoughts that raise your heart to God. Open wide the window of your soul.

ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA
(1491-1556)

MEDITATION
(from Latin *meditare* = to think over, consider): Meditation is a spiritual exercise practiced in various religions and cultures in which man is supposed to find his way to himself (and to God). Christianity recognizes and treasures a variety of meditative practices, but rejects those practices

that promise union with God or with the divine as the result of a particular technique of meditation.

A Method of Meditation (Private Prayer)

CCC — [2705-2708, 2723]

I. Preparation

As a remote preparation try to remain conscious of God as you go about your daily schedule. Frequently remind yourself of this truth: God is everywhere and is very interested in your welfare.

At the beginning of the meditation, make a deliberate Act of Faith regarding God's presence. Ask him for pardon of any faults. Ask for help to make a good meditation. Add a prayer to our Blessed Mother and other favorite saints for assistance.

II. Consideration

Read for a few minutes from the Bible or other spiritual book. Ask yourself *What have I read? What does it teach me?*

How have I acted in regard to this till now? What shall I do about it in the future?

Since the advantage of meditation is not so much in the thinking as in the praying that it leads to, it is important to devote the greater part of meditation to affections (short prayers from the heart), petitions (requests for help from God), and resolutions (practical plans for changing your life, with God's help).

Affections: "Lord, I am sorry for having offended you." "Thank you for the blessings you have given me." "I want to love you above all things." "I praise you, Lord!" "Your will be done!" "I place my trust in you."

Petitions: Ask for whatever you need: for example, forgiveness of sins, greater confidence, help in a stressful situation, specific graces to forgive someone, to be more patient, to die a good death.

Resolutions: Make them short and specific, for example, to stop gossiping with..., to be kind to..., not to lose patience with..., to be faithful to times of prayer.

III. Conclusion

1. Thank God for the insights and graces gained during this meditation.
2. Repeat your resolutions.
3. Ask for help to keep your resolutions.
4. Choose some special thought or short prayer to carry with you during the day.

I look at him, and he looks at me.

A peasant to St. John Vianney (1786-1859), when asked about his prayer