

Spiritual Practices

Prayer

Objective: Discuss what experiences you've had with prayer and what you may want to add to your prayer practice.

CONNECT

1. What were some of your reflections from last week?
2. How would you describe prayer to someone who didn't know what it was?
3. What do you like about prayer? What is difficult about prayer?

LEARN

1. Which of these have you viewed God from (Angry Tyrant, Santa Claus, Exasperated Parent) and how has that shaped the way you pray?
2. What are some ways you may need to adjust your mindset/view of God in the practice of prayer?
3. A few ways to pray were listed:
 - a. Praying the text
 - b. Praying in Picture
 - c. Fixed Hour Prayer
 - d. Take a look at some of these additional ways to pray:
 - i. Contemplative Prayer: Practicing a kind of prayer that culminates in silent attentiveness to God, a prayer that is about listening and receiving rather than speaking and expressing. To start, let go of all the thoughts, tensions, and sensations you feel and begin to rest in the love of God who dwells within. Then, choose a word to center and focus on for a period of time. At the end of your time with the word you are centering on, take time to pray.
 - ii. Examen of Consciousness: Take a few moments at the end of each day to go back over the events of the day and invite God to show us where He was present with us and how we responded to his presence. We can ask ourselves: How was God present with me today? What promptings did I notice? How did I respond or not respond? Some of us may find it helpful to keep a journal of our responses to these questions. Once you've completed thinking through these questions, end this time in prayer. Express gratitude and ask for awareness.
 - iii. Prayer Journaling: Writing out prayers or journaling the things you are praying about. There is no set formula to this. Journaling your life and prayers in a way that allows you to see what God is doing over time in your life.
4. Was there one that stood out to you or that you'd like to try in the week to come?
5. Is there one that does not appeal to you, is difficult, or intimidates you? Why?

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APPLY

This week:

1. Practice quieting the soul- We can quiet our soul by seizing on idle moments and doing nothing. Allow yourself to relax. To inhale and exhale with slow deep breaths. We cannot commune with God with cluttered minds and hearts. Allow all the things that clutter and divide to leave you heart, spirit and mind as you breathe out.
 - a. Remember to start small (maybe 2 minutes) then work towards longer periods of time
2. Choose one way you'd like to pray this week and incorporate it into your week.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Praying the Text: Try starting with Psalm 23

Praying the text/Meditation: Deeply Formed Life by Rich Villodas

Contemplative Prayer: The Sacred Way by Tony Jones

Examen of Consciousness: Sacred Rhythms by Ruth Haley Barton

Practicing the Way by John Mark Comer (digital resources available at <https://www.practicingtheway.org/prayer>)