

THE PRAYING LIFE.

Prayer. Praying is basic. Prayer is the primary action for everything that takes place in the Christian life. Prayer is a conversation. We pray because it is the only way we have to speak with God. We pray because it is also the only means for listening to God. Like all conversations, our prayer life must be nurtured, developed and formed. There are no short cuts or detours. We cannot put off praying until we are good at it. In praying, there are no formulas. It requires active participation. As we practice praying, we begin to find our rhythm. Below are five simple components to help focus your prayers. Use them each time you pray.

TEXT.

Reading scripture informs us, but praying the scriptures forms us. Many tend to think of prayer and Bible reading as separate practices. When combined they are even more powerful. Praying the scriptures is when we pray back to God what we are reading. Praying the scripture can mean either praying the prayers found in the Bible word for word as your own prayers or personalizing portions of scripture. Doing this will help you experience the emotion of the scriptures and strengthen your confidence in praying. First, select a passage that is meaningful to you. Start reading through the passage slowly meditating on each word and verse. Then bring the ideas and truth of the passage into your conversation with God.

PRAISE.

In any good relationship, the goal is to get to know each other better. God is who He says He is. His attributes are the ways in which we see Him personally and experience Him intimately. He can reveal Himself to you in many ways: redeemer, forgiver, deliverer, refuge, shepherd, shield and many more. As we contemplate the attributes of God, we cannot help but thank Him and praise Him. Ask yourself, in the passage you just read what attribute of God stands out to you. Now, thank Him for who He is.

CONFESS.

Confession is a powerful component of your prayer life. It restores our broken relationship, increases our love for Jesus and it is necessary for our spiritual growth. The act of confession should always be done with a humble heart. Confession always acknowledges a specific wrong and affirms God's willingness to forgive. Examine yourself before the Lord and confess your need for Him. Ask Him for His help in overcoming. Pray something like this, "Lord you are merciful and loving. You are holy and just. You sent your son Jesus Christ to die on a cross for my sins. I confess I have not listened to your word or obeyed your commands I'm sorry. You Lord are gracious and compassionate and I receive your forgiveness."

INTERCEDE.

Intercessory prayer is when we pray passionately and consistently for the needs of another. Jesus is a great example of an intercessory prayer. He prays for us. He stands in the gap between God and us. Praying on the behalf of others asks for comfort peace and hope. This prayer is offered to ease the pain of the broken hearted and crushed in spirit. When we intercede for others we take on the burden of those who are going through difficult situations and trials. Pray for the needs of others. Be intentional about what you are asking on the behalf of others. Sit quietly and allow God to bring to mind people and places for you to pray for them. Now pray for them, boldly, selflessly, honestly and that God will accomplish His will in their lives.

COMMIT.

Commit your week to the Lord. Remain open to the ways God will lead you this week. As you pray this week, ask God to help you notice when you become distracted. Pray that your commitment to God would be seen in the way you choose to obey His word. Pray for the courage to live with your heart fully committed to God. Pray that people around you would know you one who obeys God in all things. Prayer is first and foremost a conversation with God. He promises to always listen. When we pray we are following Jesus. The result of our praying is that we will express more of Jesus in our life.