



# Types of Prayer

Prayer in general is the conversation we have with our Father in heaven, where we commune and get to participate in relationship with Him, via dialogue. However, just like with our earthly relationships, there are different types, or styles, of conversation that we can have with people. For example, we can have a casual conversation with a friend, or a could be grieving with the same person due to unfortunate circumstances. In the same way, there are various ways in which we can approach and communicate with God depending on life's circumstance and our point along the journey of discipleship. These various forms of prayer have been developed and practiced throughout church history and some accustomed to other denominations of the Christian faith.

Below is a brief summary on each type:

## Intercessory Prayer

Intercessory prayer is simply praying on behalf of others, or put another way, standing in the gap before God on behalf of others. Richard Foster in 'Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home' writes,

*"If we truly love people, we will desire for them far more than it is within our power to give them, and this will lead us to prayer. Intercession is a way of loving others"*

Intercessory Prayer is part of loving your neighbour. To take the time to hear what people are going through or struggling with, then **to carry that burden before God and petition on their behalf is the essence of the Spirit of Christ**. Often this comes in the form of requests for healing, where we prayer that God will do something supernatural and bring heaven to earth with all its restorations. This is why Jesus in [Matthew 6](#) doesn't just teach us how to prayer personally for daily bread, but also for a regime change on behalf of humanity – your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This again is seen in [2 Chronicles 7:14](#), where God makes a promise regarding the importance of prayer at times of national disaster:

*"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land"*

Intercessory Prayer has 4 main steps:

- 1) [Get Informed](#) – engage with the facts,
- 2) [Get Inspired](#) – engage with Scripture,
- 3) [Get Indignant](#) – engage with your heart,
- 4) [Get in Synch](#) – engage with the saints (Amen).

## Prayer of Confession

Also known as the Prayer of Examen is away of reflecting on the day or week and simply confessing the sins we have committed. Often, especially in the evangelical church, we rarely take the time to confess our sins to God. We assume that we can approach the throne freely, which we can, however **we forget it is sin that separates us from the Father and by confessing our sins we graciously call on the gift of Christ's sacrifice**. This is something that Jesus is very clear about in [Matthew 6 \(NIV\)](#), as he states, *"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (v12)"*.



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This may seem redundant as God is omniscient, however, just as we can't force others to reconcile, nor can God force reconciliation between Himself and us – a person's heart needs to be in a state of repentance. Frederick Buechner states,

*“To confess your sins to God is not to tell him anything he doesn't already know. Until you confess them, however, they are the abyss between you. When you confess them, they become the bridge.”*

The Prayer of Examen has 4 simple movements:

- 1) Replay – take the time to go through the events of the day and reflect upon them. This includes everything from conversations, action, thoughts, and feelings.
- 2) Rejoice – as you run through and reflect on the day that had passed, notice the ways God was present and how He provided. Give thanks to God for being a consistent, good Father, even when we aren't always consistent or good.
- 3) Repent – As you have replayed your day and reflected upon it, take the time to ask for repentance for any sin or wrong that you may have committed, whether intentional or not. Don't be shy either, God already knows; but lean into your heart of repentance and own the mistakes that were made so you can move forward with God.
- 4) Reboot – after replaying, rejoicing and repenting we turn our attention to the challenges of tomorrow and ask God to provide us with the strength to live out His Kingdom, and be a true advocate of Christ.

## Prayer as Worship

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name”* ... It's something we usually skim over as simple, opening pleasantries, but what is Jesus communicating? He is declaring the Father's name as holy; He is beginning His prayer with praise! Often, we approach God with a list of requests when we pray, however, this isn't the only approach to prayer. As we see in the Lord's Prayer, worship is also a normal component in how we engage with God via prayer. Prayer as worship can be thought of as adoration of who God is and what He has done for us. This often occurs spontaneously when we approach God in prayer or reflect on His goodness, however, it doesn't always occur in such an organic manner. George MacDonald in 'The Diary of an Old Soul' states:

*“We who would be born again indeed must wake our souls unnumbered times a day and urge ourselves to life with holy greed.”*

This is precisely what King David does in [Psalm 103](#): 'Praise the LORD, my soul,' he says, commanding his own sluggish soul to wake up and worship. 'All my inmost being, praise his holy name.'

Some tips for Prayer as Worship include:

- 1) Praying a Psalm
- 2) Worship with music – This can be Christian worship bands, orchestra, or any other form of melody that stirs your Spirit.
- 3) Worship with others
- 4) Liturgy
- 5) Create your own style – whatever makes you Spirit awaken to the goodness of the Father.



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## Corporate Prayer

It's interesting how **the entire Lord's Prayer is written in plural**. It almost as though Jesus was trying to hint at the fact that prayer is a communal practice as well as a personal practice (contrary to our 'self improvement' stylized Western religion). We all need the encouragement, the challenge and the discomfort of active participation in a corporate pray setting.

We see this played out in story of Esther, where she urges Mordecai to tell the people to fast on her behalf for the sake of all the Jews and their deliverance,

*"Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:15-16 NIV)*

Furthermore, Esther was simply following the instructions of the prophet Joel,

*"Declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God and cry out to the Lord." (Joel 1:14 NIV)*

There is something significant that occurs when a group of people come together and in Spirit, crying out to God. **We are not designed to cry out to the Father or hallow His name entirely on our own.**

Corporate prayer typically occurs around a core issue, or desire, like in the story of Esther, where multiple hearts unit in either worshiping or petition to the Father.

## Liturgical Prayers

Authentic worship and relationship with God is anchored in biblical realities, not in our own volatile temperaments. We see this in the life of Jesus who, as a practicing Jew, would recite the sh'ma ([Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#)) three times a day and give thanks for His meals. He also had His own fixed worship – the Psalms – which was so deeply ingrained in His mind and heart that He even recited it on the cross.

Thoughtful prayers written by trusted authors and spiritual leaders can enable us to express things we find difficult and address things that may slip our mind, like to prayer for our political leaders as Paul commands. **Liturgy provides scaffolding, or framework, for prayer even when we don't want to pray, or know how to.** Liturgy is especially great in those seasons when your soul is spent and you've run out of imagination and initiative, however, still desire to commune and offer something up to God.

Some tips for Liturgical Prayer include:

- 1) Find a trusted source for liturgical prayer: could be from the Psalms, Book of Common Prayer, etc.
- 2) Read through the liturgy and understand what is being stated/declared/petitioned,
- 3) Pray the liturgy through its meaning, not simply reciting its words,
- 4) Repeat steps 2 and 3 until the meaning and depth of the liturgy is what is being declared from your heart and soul.





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## Prayer of Salvation

The Prayer of Salvation, or the Sinner's Prayer, is the declaration made by a person who has come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, died for their sins and was resurrected three days later, fulfilling the Old Testament and its prophecies in full. It often occurs after a moment of revelation, where the Spirit opens a person's 'eyes', a call from the pulpit or when a person is lead to the faith. It is also a response to Romans 10:9-11 (NIV) where Paul states,

*"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."*

The Prayer for Salvation typically involves the following:

- 1) A declaration that Jesus is Lord
- 2) A declaration of a person's sinful nature
- 3) A repentant heart and request for forgiveness
- 4) Thanksgiving for Christ's sacrifice

An example of the Prayer of Salvation by Billy Graham is below:

*"Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name. Amen"*