

Conversations with God

Luke 11:1-4 NIV

11 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

3 Give us each day our daily bread.

4 Forgive us our sins,

for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

And lead us not into temptation."

Perhaps the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray because they noticed Jesus' positive attitude about it. He was praying a lot by himself, rising a great while before day. They saw his devotion to prayer and maybe **realized that Christ was not devoted to the act prayer itself – or merely the practice, routine or ritual of it...He was drawn to His father! If you love someone, you also LOVE to speak with them.**

Jer 29:12-14 NIV

12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Paraphrase: "You will search for me and find me when you search for me with all of your...(time, pretty words, acts of piety, etc...) NO! "...when you search for me with all of your HEART!"

Prayers from the heart can be silent, spoken, cried, shouted or whispered, but they are always sincere, based on genuine desires to communicate with God. The scripture tells us that sometimes prayers are unintelligible moans that the Spirit initiates, translates and carries directly to the throne of Grace. (Romans 8:26-27)

It is OK to make prayer regular at specified times and places. It is OK to use an outline for prayer or even to pray written prayers. These however, should be simply suggestions for your conversations with God and not a checklist. They can also become helps for us when we can't pray because of emotional distress or trauma. Whenever these become simply ritual (actions without hearts engaged), they will not lead us closer to God, but farther away.

Prayer is a spiritual discipline, something we should practice and participate in often, even when we don't feel like it. But if we ever get to the place that it becomes mere ritual (lifeless duty), stop praying {like that} and start talking to (and listening) to God!

Possible Directions for your conversations with God:

- Praise God for His specific blessings in your life – (people, gifts, provision...)
- Praise God for Who He is – (For His mercy, love, power...)
- Talk to God about your individual *spiritual* needs; such as grace, forgiveness, courage, faithfulness, passion for God, etc...
- Talk to Him about your individual *physical* needs; such as healing, provision, direction in your life, etc...
- Talk to Him about the needs of others in your family, church, community, etc...
 - Spiritual needs, such as salvation, deliverance, peace, joy, etc.
 - Physical needs, such as healing, provision, restoration of relationships, etc...
- Talk to Him about the needs of our local church: vision, courage, relevance, ministry to the lost, freedom to worship, power of the Spirit etc...
- Talk to Him about the needs of the worldwide church: suffering Christians, evangelistic endeavors, overcoming the powers of darkness, etc....
- Talk to Him about our civic, world and church leaders for their salvation, direction, protection personal needs...
- Conclude with a time of silence as you focus on God and listen for His voice speaking to your heart with comfort, encouragement, inspiration to act, etc... (Write them down, please, for later reference.) Feel free to meditate and/or search the Bible for the voice and will of God...