

ALPHA
FOR YOUTH
**POCKET
PRAYER**



YOUTH

WHAT IS
CHRISTIAN
PRAYER ?

Christian prayer is simply talking to God—the same way you might talk to a friend or a parent. Prayer brings us closer to God, our Heavenly Father. It involves our hearts, our minds, and our bodies. Prayer is the most important thing you will do in your life!

Prayer does not need to be fancy. God is not worried about what words you use, if you are kneeling or sitting, or even if your eyes are closed. God just wants to hear from you.

My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me” and my heart responds, “Lord, I am coming.”

PSALM 27:8

How do you feel about the idea that God wants to hear from you no matter how you pray?

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?

1. We pray **because Jesus prayed!** He often went off alone to spend time with his Heavenly Father, giving us an example of prayer.
2. Prayer **develops our relationship with God** and helps us to stay connected to him throughout our lives.
3. Prayer **changes who we are.** When we pray, we can receive God's peace, his love, his joy, and his guidance.

Do you know anyone who prays regularly? Try asking them about their experience with prayer!

WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

1 THESSALONIANS 5:17 says to never stop praying! You can pray anytime, anywhere. Some people connect best with God in nature; some people like to write down their prayers. Prayer can look like silence, talking, listening, singing, reading the Bible, or praying with other people. The most important thing is that you do it—whatever it looks like for you.

**Can you think of a time of day that
you could try praying?**

WHAT DOES PRAYER DO?

Prayer is powerful. Not only is it how we can connect with God but how we can ask God for needs. **PHILIPPIANS 4:6** says to “present your requests to God” with “petition and thanksgiving.” Prayer has the power to change things. Scripture is filled with examples of men and women who had faith in God and prayed, and they saw miracles happen.

- Hannah prayed for a son even though she couldn't have children, and God blessed her and gave her a son. (**1 SAMUEL 1**)
- Joshua prayed for the sun to stand still during battle so there would be more daylight, and the sun literally stopped in the sky. (**JOSHUA 10**)
- Elijah prayed for rain (even though his servant said seven times, nothing's happening!). He trusted and believed God and prayed with all his might, and the Lord brought rain. (**1 KINGS 18**)

God does not always answer our prayers in the way we hope or expect. But while we pray, something is happening: God is changing our hearts! **ROMANS 12:1-2** says that when you fix your attention on God, you'll be changed from the inside out. When we pray, our desires become God's desires, and our perspective changes.

**What's on your mind that you
could talk to God about?**

How DO I PRAY?

It might feel scary to start praying if you never have, but it doesn't need to be! Remember, prayer is just talking to God like you are talking to a parent or friend. Some people like writing down their prayers like a letter or a list or talking aloud to God on a walk. When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray in MATTHEW 6, he said to "go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father." A private space is often helpful when you are trying to pray without distractions. Let yourself sit before God as simply and honestly as you can.

A great model is called the ACTS Prayer which stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

Does the idea of prayer feel exciting to you or challenging? How can you make it simple?

ADORATION

Tell God how much you love him, praising him for who he is. Remind yourself how powerful and good he is! He is on your side. He's got your back.

CONFESSION

Tell God where you have gone wrong in your week or your day. Choose to turn away from your mistakes and turn to God. Ask for his forgiveness, and thank him for his mercy and grace.

THANKSGIVING

What are you thankful for in your life? There is always something we can thank God for in prayer. Even if it is just for the breath in your lungs, have an attitude of gratitude.

SUPPLICATION

This is where you bring your cares, worries, and concerns to God. You can pray for your friends, family, and the world. Think about where in your life you need God to show up, and ask him to!

WHAT
COULD
PRAYER
LOOK LIKE
FOR
YOU?

Something we like to tell people about prayer is to “keep it simple, keep it honest, and keep it going.” Remember, prayer is one of the most important things you could do! Here are ways you could begin to incorporate prayer into your life:

Pray before a test that you're feeling nervous about.

Write down a list of prayer requests and say them out loud each day (write down answers to these prayers, too!).

Read a Psalm (try **PSALM 23** to start!) and use that as your personal prayer.

Thank God for the little things: the sun in the sky, a roof over your head, cereal for breakfast (anything you want!).



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