

Let's try praying like this...

{#5 – Daily Devotions}

What's it like?

It's like a daily guide of Scripture and prayer. It's bite-sized bits of faith and Bible. It's a way to start your day, end your day, or take a break somewhere in the middle of the day. It's a little resource that takes the pressure off you by giving your daily prayer a kick-start.

What's it for?

It's for helping you remember to pray. It's for giving you content and structure for your prayers. It's for taking some anxiety out of praying by giving you some Bible readings and mini-prayers for you. It's for busy people who feel like they don't have a lot of time, and for people with lots of time on their hands who don't want to spend it figuring out what to pray. It's for creating a starting-place, a springboard, for your prayers.

When could I use it?

You could use it any time of day. Many folks try to use it at the same time every day. Daily Devotions are usually very brief, so they don't need much time to use them. Lots of people do devotions by themselves, but you can do them with more people, too.

Where could I use it?

Pretty much anywhere. Daily devotions are often printed up in books or little pamphlets – but there are also lots of them that are online, or that you can have emailed to you or texted to your phone. Someplace comfortable is recommended for devotions so that you can give them your full attention.

How it works...

It's pretty simple. You find a devotional that you'd like, or one that you'd like to try. And then you do one devotion a day. You read the Scripture passage and other thoughts that are a part of it, and then pray. (Sometimes the prayer is there for you; sometimes you come up with one.) That's it!

Try it!

Find a devotion, either hard copy or electronic. Pick out a few entries and imagine it's a different time of day for each one: breakfast; break time; after work/school; before bed.

What did you think?

***Be advised: Some devotional books and resources are better quality than others; if you need help finding a good one, ask for help from your pastors, your sisters and brothers in Christ who already use them, or someone else you trust to give good faith advice.

Learning goal: This is another version of structured prayer (session #1), and the goal is for you to know that prayer should not be intimidating or make you feel pressured. It's not always up to you to come up with what to say, or to do research like the Biblical Prayer class (session #3). There is nothing wrong with using someone else's thoughts or writing to inspire your own prayer life.

Let's try praying like this...

{#6 – Prayer through Music}

What's it like?

It's like listening to music or singing a song. It's like praying through the words and music of someone else's song, or like lifting up your own voice in song. It's like sending your thoughts to God on a song, but in a sincere way, not a cheesy *High School Musical* or *Glee* way. It's like praying through a playlist instead of a book. It's like setting your emotions and mood to music, with God as your audience, cheering you on.

What's it for?

It's for when you don't feel like speaking, or even thinking, your prayers. It's for when mere words aren't enough to get across what you're feeling. It's for the same reasons you'd listen to music or sing or play an instrument anyway, just pointed towards God.

When could I use it?

You could use it any time you have music to listen to, or any time you feel comfortable singing or playing some music, too. Since songs can be easy to remember and since music is easy to bring with you, and since you always have your voice, you really can pray through music any time.

Where could I use it?

You could use it anywhere there is music, anywhere you bring music, anywhere you make music. You could use it any place it's appropriate to listen to music, any place you're comfortable singing, any place you can carry your instrument of choice (although pianos get pretty heavy 😊).

How it works...

It works lots of different ways. You could hit play on your playlist or an album and sing along. You could sit quietly and listen to the words and/or music (it doesn't always need words!) and say "Amen" after each track. You could sing or play a piece that really means something to you and dedicate your performance to God as a prayer. You could search for just the right song that says or in some way communicates how you feel when you're just not sure what to say, and when you find that song you sing it or play it or hum it or listen to it as a prayer. Or maybe you just listen to what you usually listen to with an open ear and an open heart, and listen for what God wants you to hear. There's no limit to what you can do with music, and so there's no limit to how you can pray with music!

Try it!

Listen to two songs (track them down on YouTube, lyrics are listed below): One song is mainstream: "Fix You" by Coldplay. One song is Christian: "Overjoyed" by Jars of Clay. Use "Overjoyed" as a sort of "proxy" prayer. Use "Fix You" for listening practice.

Sing one song: ELW #744, "Lord, Be Glorified." Perform a prayer.

Talk to a singer/musician and ask them to reflect a little about how prayer and music are important in their life.

What did you think?

Learning goal: Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” Understand that there are no limits on what to pray, *how* to pray, when to pray, or where to pray. Also, just like music hits some nerve sometimes that we can’t articulate, sometimes there really aren’t any words for our prayer, and we need music to help us.

Overjoyed

You name me
Who am I
That I should company with something so divine
Mercy waits
Overjoyed
Prospects of finding freeing
Freeing me

Chorus:

Love is the thing this time I’m sure
And I couldn’t need you more now
The way that you saw things were so pure
Overjoyed

You name me
Entertain
Thoughts of peace can overcome anything
Mirror spin
Wicked tales
Here lies reflections of
Deceptions of

[Repeat Chorus]

Missing the me from you you gave to me
Don’t like the one I have created today
Crossing nameless from the one I’ve earned
To be the one the one you gave to me

You name me
Name me
Finding freeing me

[Repeat Chorus 2x]

Overjoyed
Overjoyed

Fix You

When you try your best but you don’t succeed
When you get what you want but not what you need
When you feel so tired but you can’t sleep
Stuck in reverse

When the tears come streaming down your face
When you lose something you can’t replace
When you love someone but it goes to waste
Could it be worse?

Lights will guide you home
And ignite your bones
And I will try to fix you

High up above or down below
When you’re too in love to let it go
If you never try you’ll never know
Just what you’re worth

Lights will guide you home
And ignite your bones
And I will try to fix you

Tears stream down your face
When you lose something you cannot replace
Tears stream down your face and I

Tears stream down your face
I promise you I will learn from my mistakes
Tears stream down your face and I

Lights will guide you home
And ignite your bones
And I will try to fix you.