



Prayer

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16 ESV).

Prayer is not just a spiritual discipline but a royal invitation into the throne room of God. It does not matter where you are – you can be at your coffee table, driving in your vehicle, or waiting in line at the grocery store. Regardless of your location, when praying, you enter the royal presence of God Almighty.

Let that sink in for a moment.

The King of the universe, our Heavenly Father, invites us into His presence. What an *awesome* privilege. Through Jesus Christ, we have become guests of honor in the throne room of God.

Getting Practical

Over the years, people have developed acronyms to provide structure and focus to their prayer time. While no method is inspired by God, these types of resources are helpful as they guide us into various types of conversation with God. Without these tools, we can begin treating God like a cosmic slot machine, only engaging in a conversation when we want or need something.

The specific acronym we are using for our 40 Days to the Cross Prayer Initiative is the A.C.T.I.V.E. method. Each letter represents a specific type of conversation we will have with God during our time together.

A - Adoration

Adoration is an expression of deep honor and love toward God.

C - Confession

Confession is our response to the holiness of God. When voicing prayers of confession, we verbalize our agreement with God in two ways. First, we agree with God by acknowledging our sins. Second, we agree with and recognize the truth of who He is.

T - Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is the natural response when God provides his blessings. Thanksgiving indicates a relationship between God as the source and us as the receiver.

I - Intercession

Intercession is the act of intervening on behalf of another. Intercessory prayers focus on the needs of others.

V - Vanquishing Satan

The term, vanquishing satan, may sound odd, but it simply means practicing regular spiritual warfare by resisting Satan in prayer. People are not our enemies. Our enemies are the evil spiritual forces around us that hate God and those who follow him. As followers of Jesus, we will stand against the schemes of our spiritual adversaries through prayer.

E - Extreme Prayer

This prayer is admitting our weakness and our need for Jesus to move mountains, do the impossible, and move His kingdom forward in power.

Follow the Scripts

10-minute audio with prayer prompts will be provided for each day of our 40 Days to the Cross prayer journey. Simply follow the prompts for each day's prayer topic.

Some Final Tips

With this method in mind, please know there are many other ways to pray. This is just one we've outlined for you. However, in general, there are some other tips we'd encourage you to try in your pursuit of prayer:

Helpful Tip #1: Pray the Bible.

Turn the words of Scripture into their own personal prayers. To give an example, let's say you are reading Romans 12 in your Bible reading for the day and you really want to focus on praying verse 9 which reads: "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to

what is good.” You might pray for these realities to become true in your life by saying the following:

*“Father, teach me to be a person of **genuine love**. I know this is how Jesus loved me, so please teach me to love in the same way. Teach me also to **hate what is evil**—teach me to **hate sin** and **love what is good**. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”*

Helpful Tip #2: Journaling.

Another tool believers have found helpful through the years is journaling. Journaling is a great way to express our hearts to God, reflect on His promises, and write down our prayers in a way meaningful to you.

Helpful Tip #3: Fasting.

Jesus expected His followers to combine prayer with fasting. That’s right— *fasting*. Jesus didn’t say “*If you fast...*” but rather “*When you fast...*” (Matthew 6:16–17). There are various ways people define fasting. In general, Fasting is a believer’s voluntary abstinence from food *for a spiritual purpose*. In other words, fasting is not meant to be a form of torment. It is a method for *intensified* and *focused prayer*.

Fasting may sound strange, but in reality, it comes down to these three choices.

1. Identify a specific issue you would like to devote prayer to (i.e. pride, anger, lust, marriage problems, difficulty at work, etc.)
2. Select a day (24-hour fast) or period of time (i.e. 8–5; temporary fast) to pray about this issue. Every time you feel the sensation of hunger, that’s your alarm bell to talk with God about the thing you are focused on.
3. Commit to finishing the time of fasting.

You may be surprised that what seems a bit crazy to our world of self-indulgence is actually a great tool for spiritual relief and growth. The best way to find out is to give this a try for yourself.