

Everyday Prayers

The following suggestions for everyday prayers were created by Steve Shussett, author of "Nurturing Our Faith," a regular department in *Horizons*.

Prayers of Attention

The following words and phrases can be used as calming prayers, to let your attention settle while distractions are shed. Rhythmically repeat the word or phrase, breaking as indicated by the slash (/) and letting each word lightly float on the breath.

Come, Lord Jesus / hear my prayer.
Jesus / fill me.
Come / Holy Spirit.
Sha/lom.

Prayers of the Heart

One way to begin to pray without ceasing is to select a brief prayer/phrase that can be repeated throughout the day, while walking, driving, waiting in line or any point at which you have a free moment. Any phrase from scripture can be suitable, as well as phrases from hymns, poetry or other writings. A famous example is the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God / have mercy on me, a sinner."

Other possibilities include:

Come, Lord Jesus.
The Lord is my Light.
Fear not, I am with you.
The Lord is my Shepherd.
Be still, and know that I am God.
Low, I am with you.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Examples from hymns:

Breathe on me, breath of God.
Great is thy faithfulness.
Guide me, O though Great Jehovah.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
O God, our help in ages past . . .
A mighty fortress is our God.

Walking Meditations

Take a number of steps with each in-breath, then again with each out-breath. Choose a number that is comfortable for you, mindful that the number of steps for the in-breath do not have to be the same for the out-breath.

One way to gauge your breaths and steps is to use scripture or a hymn verse to mark your time. For example, "Lord, have mercy" on the in-breath, "Hear our prayer" on the out-breath. This is a good way to take an otherwise non-Christian or secular practice and make it an act of Christian faith.

Daily Prayers

Say or write a prayer for daily activities. What do you do each day that is a prompt for thanksgiving or petition? "Thank you, God, that I still have my teeth" as you brush them each morning, or "Help me to be patient" as you dust.

Create a house blessing. Write a prayer for one or more rooms in your home, asking God to sanctify the things that take place there. If every moment and every location can become a time and place for encountering God, how would you pray that God will meet you in the kitchen, the dining room, the bedroom or the bathroom?

Praying Through Your Meal

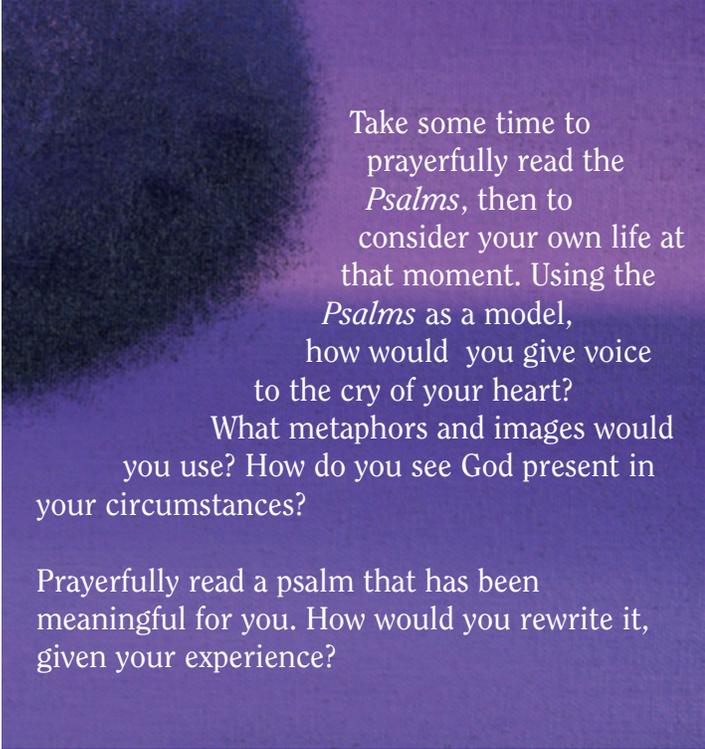
Take a moment to offer a short prayer between each bite you take. Just as we could thank God for every breath we take, so might we thank God for every morsel we consume.

Lectio Divina

Slowly, read a short passage of scripture, letting your awareness rest in turn on each word, savoring it. As you read, be alert for any particular word or phrase that draws your attention in a special way.

Meditate on this word or phrase, allowing it to engage you fully. Does the word or phrase connect with some aspect of your own experience? As you hold this word or phrase in your heart, let yourself become aware of any answering words, images or memories that arise in you.

Respond to the Word you have heard, simply and directly. Your heart may call out in thanksgiving or prayer or joy. If the Word has been painful, your response might be one of remorse or anger or supplication. Rest in God's presence, simply content to be with God.



Take some time to prayerfully read the *Psalms*, then to consider your own life at that moment. Using the *Psalms* as a model, how would you give voice to the cry of your heart?

What metaphors and images would you use? How do you see God present in your circumstances?

Prayerfully read a psalm that has been meaningful for you. How would you rewrite it, given your experience?

Log in with God

Use technology to help you in your devotional life. Set up your screen saver with a meaningful Bible verse or quote from a spiritual writing. Make your computer's wallpaper a scene from nature or a famous piece of art, something that reminds you of God's creative power. Each time you have to enter a password, make it a word of religious importance to you—the gifts of the Spirit, one by one, will keep you going for a long time!

Dialogue with God

As you read scripture, personalize it. Think of it as God speaking directly to you. Begin by inserting your name whenever another name is used (for example, when you read "Israel" or "Martha" or "Isaiah," insert your name instead). When you see the words "I," "my," "you" or "your," envision God speaking to you.

Suggested scripture:

"As a deer longs for flowing streams . . ."
(*Ps. 42:1-5*)

The call of Isaiah (*Isa. 6:5-8*)

Jonah in the belly of the large fish (*Jon. 2:1-6*)

Mary and Martha (*Lk. 10:38-42*)

Trust and wait (*Isa. 30:15*)

Called by name (*Isa. 43:1-7*)

Bead Prayer

Make a set of prayer beads, assigning a particular prayer to a single bead or a collection of beads. For example, a set of ten beads could mark the Ten Commandments or the Beatitudes of *Matthew 5:1-12* (including "Rejoice and be glad"). A single, larger bead could mark off sets, pointing to a different prayer, like the Apostle's Creed, *Psalm 23* or the Lord's Prayer. Use these while sitting quietly or while walking.