

# Pray as You Can

## Guide to Personal Prayer

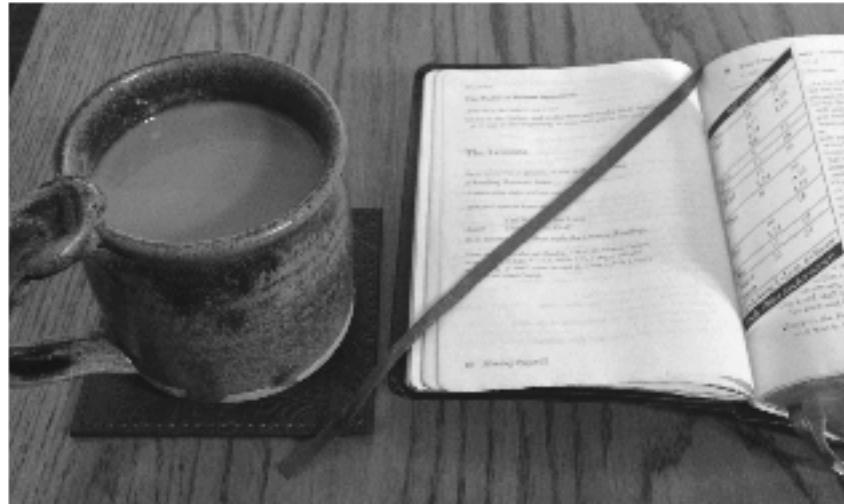


There is no right way to pray. A story is told about Jordan of Saxony, who followed st. Dominic as the leader of the Order of Preachers in the 13th Century. When one of the brothers asked Jordan to teach him the best way to pray, Jordan reported said: "The most beneficial prayer will be the one which moves your heart in the most beneficial way."

**In other words, pray as you can- God will do the rest.**

# The Liturgy of the Hours or Daily Office

## The Church's Prayer



*“Seven times a day I praise you” – Psalm 119:164*

### **The Daily Office**

This is an ancient practice that uses daily prayers to mark the times of the day. For Anglicans, this generally comes in the form of the two main offices of Daily Morning Prayer and Daily Evening Prayer. They may be led by lay people and are said communally or individually. Other offices as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) include Noonday Prayer and Compline (an office said before going to sleep).

Morning Prayer, BCP 75

Noonday Prayer, BCP 103

Evening Prayer, BCP 115

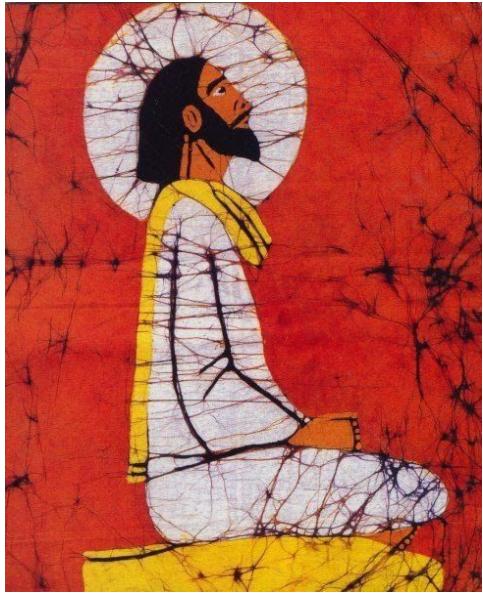
Compline, BCP 127

Daily Devotions for Individual and Families, BCP 137

Prayers and Thanksgivings, BCP 810

Daily Office Lectionary, BCP 934

<https://www.missionstclare.com/english/>



## Basic Christian Contemplative Practice

*“then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7)*

When we connect to our breath (which is/was God given) then we connect to God. Basic contemplative prayer focuses on the breath.

### Guidelines

Sit tall in your chair (or on the floor on a meditation cushion)  
Place your hands on your lap

Breathe in and out through your nose  
Close your eyes  
And focus on your breath

Feel the cool air coming into your nostrils  
And when you blow out- picture it as just a smoke rising away from you.

When your mind wonders--- just turn your focus again to your breath and notice those sensations.

Stay open and in a place for listening to the movement of God within.

# Centering Prayer



Centering Prayer is based on the wisdom saying of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: “When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you”(MT 6:6). It is also inspired by writings of major contributors to the Christian contemplative heritage including John Cassian, the anonymous author of The Cloud of Unknowing, Francis de Sales, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Thérèse of Lisieux, and Thomas Merton.

In Centering Prayer you choose a word, sometimes called a prayer word, sometimes called a sacred word, that expresses your desire to be in an intimate relationship with God. This word says you intend to enter that secret room of communion with God. It is not a time for thinking or for words but for presence. Whenever a thought kidnaps you from that intention, you return to that word as a way of letting go of the thought and returning to God.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a prayer word that expresses your desire to be with God in faith and love. You may be led to use your most familiar name for God. Some examples may include the following: God, Jesus, Father, Abba, Mother, Lord, Spirit. Jesus' word was Abba. The early church used the name of Jesus when approaching God.

You may be led to choose another word that expresses, for you, your desire to be in communion with God. Such a word could be love, amor, peace, faith, trust, grace, mercy, joy, silence, stillness, calm, open, presence, yes, amen.

## Guidelines

**Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.**

**Sitting comfortable and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to be attentive to God.**

**When you become aware of thoughts, gently return to the sacred word.**

**At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a minute or two.**

Possible Sacred words: Lord, Jesus, Abba, Love, Peace, Shalom



# Prayer Journal

Keeping a journal is a meaningful prayer practice. Putting thoughts on paper as we pray can help us to be more reflective about what we think and feel. Journaling can open your mind and heart so that you are better able to hear what God really wants of us.

## Some Guidelines

**Begin with prayer.** Invite God to use your journaling experiences to draw you closer to Him and help you grow as a person. Ask Him to use your journaling to help you discover more about both Him and yourself.

**Get ready.** Decide when and where you'll journal regularly. Choose any time or place that works best for you – from early morning journaling in a quiet room of your home, to late night journaling in a busy coffeehouse. Then buy a journal that appeals to you for writing your journal entries by hand, or set up a special file on your computer to type in your journal entries.

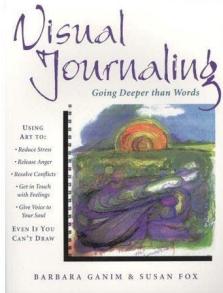
**Give yourself freedom.** Allow yourself to write or draw whatever comes to your mind. Don't criticize or censor your journal entries. Don't worry about trying to stick to grammar or spelling rules, trying to be logical, comparing yourself to others, or avoiding the expression of troubling thoughts or feelings. Simply write, to get what's on your mind out on paper or on the computer screen. Write what's true and real, keeping in mind that God loves you unconditionally.

## Some Ideas for Journaling

**Write a letter to God.** Use your journal to write to God, aiming to be truthful rather than nice. Tell Him where you are right now in your journey with Him, and wish you wish you were. Describe how you see God and how you see yourself at this point in your life's story.

**Mine beneath the surface of your life.** Go deeper than just recording events in your journal. Aim to express your reactions to the events you experience, writing meaningful thoughts and feelings you have rather than just what's happened lately in your life. Pray about the various parts of your life – your family and friends, your work, your health, etc. – and ask God to show you what He would like you to reflect on more deeply in your journal. Accept God's invitation to listen to His prompting through your journal and act on it.

**Seek Guidance.** Write down your questions for God and wait about a week, listening for any answers you might receive. Then, after the week is over, write down any new insights you now have about the situation. List some of the ways you've been disappointed lately and honestly record your feelings about them. Then describe some specific ways you can continue to live in hope, trusting in God's goodness despite your disappointments.



# Visual Journaling

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE AN ARTIST OR HAVE “ARTISTIC TALENT”

<sup>4</sup>they said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. <sup>5</sup>Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” “They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. **Jesus bent down and wrote**

**with his finger on the ground.** (John 8:4-6)

In the Gospel of John Jesus communicates with a visual image to teach and give a message to those who were persecuting a woman. Visual art is one way in which to free ourselves and our mind to listen and to see what God might be saying to us. Beginning an art journal practice is one way to connect with a deeper place. Like a dream, an art journal entry will open a secret door and show the unconscious parts of you. Everything in this inner life emerges as you journal, the imagination is fully activated, and you can let go and bypass the mind which wants to make art that is perfect. Looking back at a journal provides a road map of how far you have come on the spiritual journey.

## Guidelines

**Begin with silence.** Ask God to be with you and to open your mind and heart.

**Set an intention.** An intention designates a purpose, reason, or goal for what you are searching for or yearning for. Some examples: I intend to connect with the feeling of tension in my stomach. I intend to be open to whatever images want to move through me. My intention is to understand the mood swing I am experiencing. My intention is to know the truth in my heart.

**Connect with your body.** Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Take 3 long breaths. When you breathe in picture light and breathing out color—any color at all. Allow your attention to draw to a place in your body, could be from tension or relaxation. If you find you are not drawn anywhere in particular just allow your awareness to move into your heart center. See what comes up.

**Begin to draw.** Using a color you saw, or an inner image you experienced. After you finish, then Look at your picture.

**Gaze upon the image and journal about it.**

Here are some questions to consider: As you look at the drawing, how does it make you feel? How do the colors make you feel?

Is there anything in your drawing that disturbs you? If so what and why?

What do you like best about your drawing?

What is this image about?

What is this image trying to tell me?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me?

**Close with a prayer of Gratitude.**

# Prayer of Examen

The prayer of Examen is an examination of our lives, a way of honestly assessing our lives in the light of God's mercy. This prayer focuses on our reflection on a narrow time span, perhaps the previous day or week. It is not intended to be a tallying of failures and successes but an assessment of

how we have lived in union with God. Because of the nature of the reflection, the prayer of examen is best practiced in the quiet of evening.

This can be a mental practice, but most often is a written practice.



## Guidelines

Five basic movements of the prayer:

1. Celebrate and Give Thanks
2. Pray for God's illumination
3. Examine the events and encounters of the day
4. sift through the joys, sorrows, struggles and delights asking God for needed grace
5. Rest. Rest in God's grace while living in hope for the day to come.

## The Contemplative Prayer Walk

As you set out on the path you do it with the intention to meet God. For it is not so much a matter where and when you walk, but rather that you are open to encountering the Holy on the path.



In contemplative walk, a consciousness of breathing is important. We breathe deeply, uniting our breath with an invocation of the Holy Spirit, willing God to awaken our own spirit. We are conscious of the blessing of all those who have walked this path before us, and we remember them with gratitude.

As you walk give silent thanks as you see color and texture, feel the wind or heat or cold, hear chirping birds or rustling leaves or the rush of cars and the roar of airplanes. And remember that all is worthy of prayer. With each step, release your own agenda and embrace God's peace and plan for your life's path.

**Of course you can also do with while running or bicycling.**

## Walking a Labyrinth

This is another form of walking meditation by walking or even tracing the path of a labyrinth.



There is no "right" or "wrong" way to walk a labyrinth. Labyrinth walks are sometimes referred to as "body prayer" or walking meditation. Here is one suggestion of how you could walk a labyrinth:

The entrance can be a place to stop, reflect, make prayer or intention for the spiritual walk you are about to take. The walk around the design to the center can be a "letting go" - a quieting of the thoughts, worries, lists of tasks to do, a letting go unto the experience of being present in the body. Arrival at the center rosette - a place of prayer/meditation - "letting in" Gods guidance, the divine into our lives. When ready, the walk out "letting out" takes us back into our lives, empowered by spirit to transform our lives and actions.

# Praying with Icons



Icons come from the Eastern Orthodox Tradition, and some date back as early as the 4th century. Oftentimes in prayer, our imaginations can race in a distracted manner. If you are a visual person Icons can help us overcome distraction. They invite us to focus on an image of the holy that points the way to God. Icons take us beyond words and give us a visual reminder of God's love for us. It is another way to ponder our faith, grace, and hope.

Icons can display a story of faith, or a saint, or images of Jesus himself. You are invited to enter into the icon and to find your place in it, or simply allow for Jesus to stare back at you.

# Christian Mantras

A Mantra is simply a prayer that is said over and over again as a way to steady our mind and to focus on our relationship with God. Mantras can be helpful when you are faced with a difficult task, or even to help you keep focused on God's love for you during a busy and hectic week. You can choose your mantra or make up your own.

## The Jesus Prayer

**“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”**

It is one of our most ancient mantras that dates back to Russian folk lore, *The Way of the Pilgrim*. This short phrase is not meant to be an end in itself, but rather a tool for a changed life of prayer. Its repetition, frequent and regular, causes the mind and heart to become accustomed to the continual outcry to God, until, in God's time, one's whole being begins to realize its intimate proximity to God at every moment.

Here are some other Suggestions for Mantras...

**Ma-ra-na-tha** - Come Lord; in ancient Aramaic and is our oldest Christian Mantra.

**Shalom** - Hebrew word for Peace.

**Abba** - Jesus word for God the Father.

**Shema Israel Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad** - Hebrew for Hear Oh Israel the Lord God is One.

**Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.** - Psalm 37:7

**Be Still and Know that I am God.** - Psalm 46:10

**The Lord is my shepherd**

**Peace Be Still**

**The Joy of the Lord is my Strength.**

**Lord direct my steps.**

**Create in me a clean heart and renew my spirit.**

**Jesus Remember me when you come into your Kingdom**

# Lectio Divina

A very ancient art, practiced at one time by all Christians, is a technique known as lectio Divina- a slow contemplative praying of the Scriptures which enables the Word of God to become a means of union with God.

## **Lectio - Read**

Lectio Divina begins with cultivating the ability to listen deeply, to hear “with the ears of our hearts” as St. Benedict encourages us in the prologue to The Rule.

The Reading or listening is the first step in Lectio Divina it is very different from speed reading. Lectio is reverential listening; listening both in a spirit of silence and of awe. We are listening for the still small voice of God that will speak to us personally-not loudly, but intimately. In Lectio we read slowly attentively, gently listening to hear a word or phrase that is God’s word for us this day.

## **Meditatio - Meditate**

Once we have read the passage we must meditate on it or ruminate on it. The image of the ruminant animal quietly chewing its cud was used in antiquity as a symbol of the Christian pondering the Word of God. Christians have always seen a scriptural invitation to lectio divina in the example of the Virgin Mary “pondering in her heart” what she saw and heard of Christ (Luke 2:19).

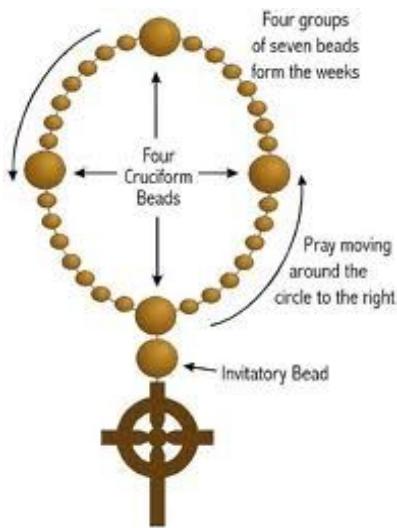
On way to Meditatio is to take the word or words from the passage and gently repeat it to yourself. Allow it to interact with your thoughts, hopes, memories or desires. This is the second step of lectio divina. Through meditatio we allow God’s word to become His word for us, a word that touches us and affects us at our deepest levels.

## **Oratio - Prayer**

Oratio is understood both as dialogue with God, that is, as loving conversation with the One who has invited us into His embrace. We allow the word that we have taken in and on which we are pondering to lead the conversation with God. God invites us in Lectio Divina to hold up our most difficult and pain-filled experiences to Him. This is your time to simply talk with God.

## **Contemplatio - Contemplation**

Finally we simply rest in the presence of God; wordless, quiet rest. This time is to simply enjoy the experience of being in the presence of God.



## The Anglican Rosary

Since the earliest of times, people have used strings of nuts or beads on a cane to keep track of prayer offered to God. This form of prayer is helpful for someone who always needs to be “doing something” or moving in order to focus.

### A TRADITIONAL PRAYER

#### **The Cross**

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us

#### **The Invocatory Bead**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen

#### **The Cruciform Beads (The Lord’s Prayer)**

Our Father, which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

#### **The Week Beads (The Jesus Prayer)**

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

#### **The Last Cruciform Bead**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

#### **The Dismissal Bead**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

#### **The Cross**

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us.

Amen.

## A SERENITY ANGLICAL ROSARY PRAYER

### **The Cross**

God take and receive my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my will.

### **The Invitatory Bead**

All that I am and all that I have you have given me.

### **The Cruciform Beads (The Lord's Prayer)**

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the Kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### **The Week Beads**

God grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.

### **The Last Cruciform Bead**

Let me live one day at a time and enjoy one moment at a time.

### **The Dismissal Bead**

Let me accept hardships as the pathway to peace taking this world as it is, not as I would have it.

### **The Cross**

Let me trust that you will make all things right if I surrender to your will. Amen.

## PENITENTIAL ANGLICAL ROSARY PRAYER

### The Cross

Bless the Lord who forgiveth all our sins;  
His mercy endureth for ever. Amen

### The Invitatory Bead

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith:

That shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, [and with all thy strength - Deut. 6:5]. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

### First Cruciform Bead

Recount and confess sins pertaining to sins of the heart.

*Have you experienced feelings of anger, hurt, frustration, jealousy, envy or anxiety?*

### The Week Beads (The Jesus Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

or

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,  
Jesus Christ the Righteous. (I John 2:1)

### Second Cruciform Bead

Recount and confess sins pertaining to sins of the soul.

*Have you spent time in daily prayer? Have you been faithful in reading God's Word? Have you attended church weekly? Have you made your church family an integral part of your life? Have you been generous with your time in assisting others?*

### Third Cruciform Bead

Recount and confess sins pertaining to sins of the mind.

*Have you been diligent in your job or your studies? Has your language been clean?*

### Fourth Cruciform Bead

Recount and confess sins pertaining to sins of the body.

*Have you treated your body as the temple of God? Have you eaten sparingly of nutritious foods that enable you to reach and maintain a healthy weight and sound body? Have you been giving your body enough rest? Have you kept your muscles fit and toned through exercise and activity? Have you kept your body pure from fleshly indulgences?*

### **The Last Cruciform Bead**

Almighty and most merciful Father,  
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,  
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,  
we have offended against thy holy laws,  
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,  
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.  
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,  
spare thou those who confess their faults,  
restore thou those who are penitent,  
according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord;  
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,  
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,  
to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

### **The Dismissal Bead**

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant us absolution and remission of all our sins, true  
repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

### **The Cross**

Let us bless the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

## Final Word

These are just some ways to pray. Really if you can do anything a pray. You can wash the dishes or fold laundry with the intention to be aware of God's presence. The only thing that really matters is showing up.

God is not elsewhere. Prayer is taking a moment and being aware of the presence of God in the here and now. So Pray as you Can. The final word comes from a poem written by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

## Trust in the Slow Work of God

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.  
We are quite naturally impatient in everything  
to reach the end without delay.  
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.  
We are impatient of being on the way  
to something unknown,  
something new.  
Yet it is the law of all progress that is made  
by passing through some stages of instability  
and that may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you.  
Your ideas mature gradually. Let them grow.  
Let them shape themselves without undue haste.  
Do not try to force them on  
as though you could be today what time  
-- that is to say, grace --  
and circumstances  
acting on your own good will  
will make you tomorrow.  
Only God could say what this new Spirit  
gradually forming in you will be.

Give our Lord the benefit of believing  
that his hand is leading you,  
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself  
in suspense and incomplete.

Above all, trust in the slow work of God,  
our loving vine-dresser.

Amen.