

7

WAYS TO PRAY

with your disciple

1

PRAYER REQUESTS

Nothing fancy here! Simply ask the person you're meeting with what s/he would like prayer for.

PROS: In an authentically vulnerable relationship, you'll hear how their heart is doing and real-life stuff will come up that may not have come up otherwise.

CONS: If you haven't reached a certain level of trust or vulnerability, requests can be impersonal or "not real."

TIPS: Don't just stop at praying for the requested need. Let the Spirit guide your time, praying as you are led and for what you think they need prayer for, too!

2

PRAY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Choose a passage in the Bible to pray through together. (Try Psalm 16/34/139; Eph. 1:15-23, Php. 1:9-11.) The general idea is to take turns going verse-by-verse or phrase-by-phrase, either praying word-for-word or using the verse/phrase as a launching point for a more personal prayer, adding in your own thoughts.

PROS: Scripture-based prayer; the structure often really helps people as they learn how to pray.

CONS: If you don't set clear parameters, people can become confused about what they're supposed to do.

3

CHOOSE ONE FOCUS

Choose a type of prayer (intercession, praise, confession, etc.) and practice only praying this one type.

PROS: Unites in a common purpose, helps you practice discipline in prayer life/think carefully about what you are actually praying for.

CONS: Can lose impact if done too often, especially for people who prefer to have more flexibility in prayer.

TIPS for PRAISE: Don't ask God for anything. Only speak words that praise God for who He is or what He has done. Use Scripture if you need help. Variation: Choose 1-2 aspects of God's character - from Scripture - ahead of time and focus on only those [e.g. "God of Love": Jeremiah 31:3, Zephaniah 3:17, Deuteronomy 7:6-8].

TIPS for INTERCESSION: Choose something/someone that needs prayer. Pray specifically, asking God for specific requests. Try to pray God's Kingdom values [hope/peace/joy/boldness/etc.].

TIPS for CONFESSION: Spend time in confession, either personal sins (confessing before others is scary but powerful) or the sins of our nation/culture. (Biblical precedence: Nehemiah 1:5-7, Daniel 9:2-20)

4

POPCORN STYLE

This is a great way to pray if you're short on time or not yet equally vulnerable. Simply think of what you want to pray and sum it up in ONE WORD, and pray that one word. Do it once, or take turns saying only one word.

5

ACTS

Love acronyms? This is the prayer for you! Follow the below format to structure your prayers:

A // ADORATION: Praise God for who He is and what He's done. Think BIG picture. (See above "Praise" ideas.)

C // CONFESSION: Confess your sins.

T // THANKSGIVING: Thank God for what He has done and how He is working in your life. Think PERSONAL.

S // SUPPLICATION: Use this time to make your requests to God.

PROS: Structure can be helpful for those learning to pray!

CONS: Prayer can begin to feel stifled if you follow any outline too strictly - leave room for the Spirit to guide your prayers, and feel free to make variations!

VARIATION: Look through the prayers of people in the Bible to observe which parts of this outline they use and what they do differently.

6

LECTIO DIVINA

This prayer provides ample time to thoughtfully and prayerfully respond to Scripture. To practice this technique, follow the below four steps:

1. READ the passage aloud several times. (Ideally, this is done with more than one person, with a leader reading and guiding the time.)

2. MEDITATE on the passage. (It is important to emphasize that this does not mean Eastern meditation - the practice of emptying our minds. A better word might be ponder: consider the passage from several different angles, and consider how it helps you know God/your identity in Christ more fully.)

3. PRAY through the passage, conversing with God, telling Him what you are thinking about the passage or what you discovered while meditating on it. Ask Him the questions that came up while meditating, or use this time to confess or otherwise respond as the Holy Spirit leads you.

4. Take time to CONTEMPLATE. Dwell in His presence, simply being with Him, quieting (not emptying) your mind so you can learn to hear His voice. Practice listening. (Psalm 46:10)

PROS: Excellent discipline to practice, especially step 4. Works best, especially with new practitioners, if you keep steps 2-4 to 30-90 seconds in the beginning, then slowly increase your time.

CONS: Time consuming, and works best when someone is leading each step, so it's not always the best for one-on-one prayer times, especially if you want to be praying out loud together.

7

JEHOSHAPHAT'S MODEL

Jehoshaphat models a beautiful prayer in a moment of distress that provides an excellent framework for our own prayers. (See 2 Chronicles 20 ESV)

1. ARE YOU NOT? (v. 6) - first focus on WHO God is: His character and His ability.

2. DID YOU NOT? (v. 7) - next, focus on WHAT God has done, especially in your own life!

3. WILL YOU NOT? (v. 12) - finally, focus on what God can and will do for you, presenting your request to Him. Remember and claim His promises!

PROS: Again, a great structure to grow your prayer life.

CONS: Be sure to keep #3 based on Biblical promises.