

An exercise in Silent Prayer

Find a time - 15 minutes to a half hour at the same time each day if possible - during which you can be silent.

In order to quiet the mind and the heart, take a few deep breaths, inhaling the air that is fresh and clear and exhaling the musty and the stale.

Then say a brief prayer, such as: "Help me to *live* in your presence."

Gently but firmly let go of words and thoughts (even about God), also of cares, concerns, and anxieties (at least for this brief period of time).

Try just to be quiet, knowing in faith that you are in the presence of God, which means being in the presence of love. Relax in the silence of that presence. *Be* there. Do not feel that there is anything you have to do.

If you are distracted (as surely you will be), quietly let go of the distractions to the degree that you can. If they remain or return, don't be disturbed, for you are still in the presence of God. To deal with the distractions, you might want to repeat the short prayer - "Help me to *live* in your presence."..... to help you return to inner quiet and silence. But don't fuss too much about distraction.

Conclude with the Lord's Prayer or a favourite psalm or some spontaneous words of praise and thanks.

Try to develop the habit of saying at different times during the day the prayer you prayed earlier - - "Help me to *live* in your presence", or some other aspiration as a way of keeping "awareness of God" closer to the surface of consciousness.

Help me pray



Here I am in this stressful situation and I don't know how to pray.

For many people, our experience of prayer is a very noisy memory of blessings we heard as a child in church and in the media. But when it comes to a time of need – we just can't remember them. They can seem like someone else's words. We feel alone and not equipped.

Prayer is not active – it's passive.

We may use some words to focus our attention on the sacred – but in truth, praying should be about listening.

We need to leave a little space...

A little silence

for the answers and the comfort to come to us.

If you're babbling on

Neither God, or anyone else, can get a word in edgewise.

[So if you want to know how to pray – be silent and listen.](#)

This booklet is a gift from the Canberra Hospital Chaplaincy. Please feel free to take it with you.

A simple way to pray

It's not so easy so here are some pointers:

1. Put your feet flat on the floor
2. Close your eyes
3. Listen to the noise outside the room – the voices, clatter and footsteps
4. Leave that and listen to the noise inside the room
5. Take a deep breath. Take another one.
6. Now use a few words to settle your mind. You could use something you know like the Lord's Prayer or the 23rd psalm (some of these are on the following pages). If you use these prayers—say them as if it is the 1st time. Think about what they mean.

Or you could use a silent mantra (chant) such as one of these:

Fill me	Love me
Guide me	Hold me
Hold me	Help me

7. Then stop. Sit in the silence. As the Benedictine's would say, 'Listen with the ear of your heart'.

Stay there for at least 5 minutes and listen to the feelings that bubble up inside. Listen to the silence. **That** is sacred silence. If all you hear is silence—maybe God's listening too!

Words to begin or end your praying



Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.
He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no
evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.
Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of my
life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.