

HOW DO WE PRAY?

Prayer is a conversation with God where we talk with Him and hear from Him as we pray. There is no one way to pray, but a pattern for prayer can help especially as you are learning to talk to God throughout your daily life. Many people use the acrostic ACTS to guide their prayer by Adoring God, Confessing Sin to God, Thanking God, and making Supplication to God by asking Him to meet your needs.

ADORATION: Adoration is an act of praise and worship. Adoring the Lord means offering Him the affections of your heart and paying honor to Him for His mighty power, wisdom, strength, goodness, mercy, and love.

CONFESSION: In the act of confession you are admitting to God that you struggle with specific sins. As you confess, ask God to remove your old, sinful ways of living and know that God is faithful and just to forgive sins. Through confession we are made new and more like Jesus.

THANKSGIVING: Thank God for what He has already done in your life and reflect on the many blessings in your life. Thank Him for His faithfulness in keeping promises in your life, those of your family and friends, and the circumstances in your life.

SUPPLICATION: Ask the Lord to meet your physical, spiritual and emotional needs. Make specific requests so that you know that you are trusting God.

WHY AREN'T MY PRAYERS BEING ANSWERED?

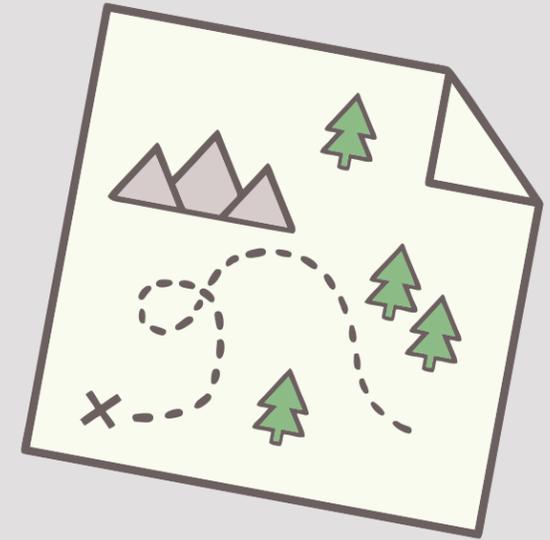
Praying and feeling like your prayers aren't being answered can be very frustrating. If you are experiencing this, know that God hears and acts on every prayer that is prayed. God answers prayers in a number of ways including:

- **Yes:** your request lines up with God's plan and God's timing so He answers your prayer as you have prayed He would.
- **No:** your requests aren't in line with His will for your life. God will never answer a prayer that isn't in line with His Word and His plan for your life.
- **Slow:** God may wait to answer your prayer so that the timing of your request lines up with His perfect timing for your life. When God says to slow down, it is a time to keep praying and learn to patiently trust Him and grow in your faith.

Learning how God answers prayers can help you deal with the frustration of seemingly unanswered prayers. So, too, can looking at the condition of your prayer life before God. Evaluate your prayer using this questions:

- **Are my prayers too vague?** Bless everyone in the world. Forgive everyone who has hurt me. General prayers makes it difficult to see when prayers are answered.
- **Am I out of step with God or in open rebellion?** Confession is key to answered prayers. God turns His ears away from the wicked. [Psalm 66, Psalm 109:7, John 9:31, Proverbs 15:29, Proverbs 28:9, James 5:16]
- **Am I impatient?** Do you need patience right now?
- **Do I remember what God has already done?** Living thankfully reminds us that God is always working. We keep praying when we know that God is working.

FAMILY PRAYER JOURNEY



16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

TAKE YOUR FAMILY ON A JOURNEY TO PRAY TOGETHER. THIS PRAYER JOURNEY WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH THE NEXT 8 WEEKS WITH A NEW PRAYER PERSPECTIVE OR TECHNIQUE EACH WEEK. AS YOU EMBARK ON THIS JOURNEY, FEEL FREE TO GO AT YOUR OWN PACE AND FEEL FREE TO CHOOSE YOUR OWN PATH. IF A CERTAIN PRAYER ACTIVITY IS BEST FOR YOUR FAMILY, FOCUS ON THAT ONE. IF ONE DOESN'T WORK FOR YOU, DON'T WORRY. CONTINUE ON YOUR PRAYER JOURNEY.

GETTING STARTED ON THIS FAMILY PRAYER JOURNEY IS EASY. CHECK OUT THE PRAYER MAP INSIDE AND CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE. NEED A LITTLE HELP? WE HAVE ALSO INCLUDED INFORMATION, WHICH YOU CAN SHARE WITH YOUR FAMILY ABOUT WHY WE PRAY, HOW TO PRAY, AND WHAT TO DO WHEN PRAYER IS FRUSTRATING.

WHY WE PRAY

Knowing why we pray matters. We pray because we need it and God wants to hear from us. Some wonder why we need to pray if God knows everything and if God knows our thoughts, but that limits what happens when we pray. Prayer is a conversation where we not only talk to God but we also hear from God. In prayer, we hand God the concerns of our day so that we trust Him with them instead of worrying about them so there is nothing too big or nothing too small to pray about.

- We pray because much is accomplished by prayer. [James 5:16]
- We pray because God commanded it and because we need to connect with Him through prayer. [1 Thess 5:16-18]
- We pray because it prepares our hearts for what we will receive from Him. [Matthew 6:6]
- We pray to adore God, to praise Him, to express our wonder at who He is and at what He has done for us. [Psalm 66:17]
- We pray to confess to God our sins and to experience grace, mercy, and forgiveness at His hand. [1 John 1:9]
- We pray to thank Him for all that He is and all that He has done. [Colossians 4:2]
- We pray to make our needs known to Him. [Philippians 4:6-7]

FAMILY PRAYER JOURNEY

1

Find a good kid's picture book. Look at the pictures together and find similar objects in your world to thank God for. Think about nature, people, needs met, or things you know about God's character, how can you see that around you?

2

Cut out or draw the word "Pray" in big bubble letters on a poster board. Hang it in your house in a high traffic area. Invite everyone who is in your home to write things they are praying for or need prayer for. Take a weekly time to time pray for these specific things together as a family.

3

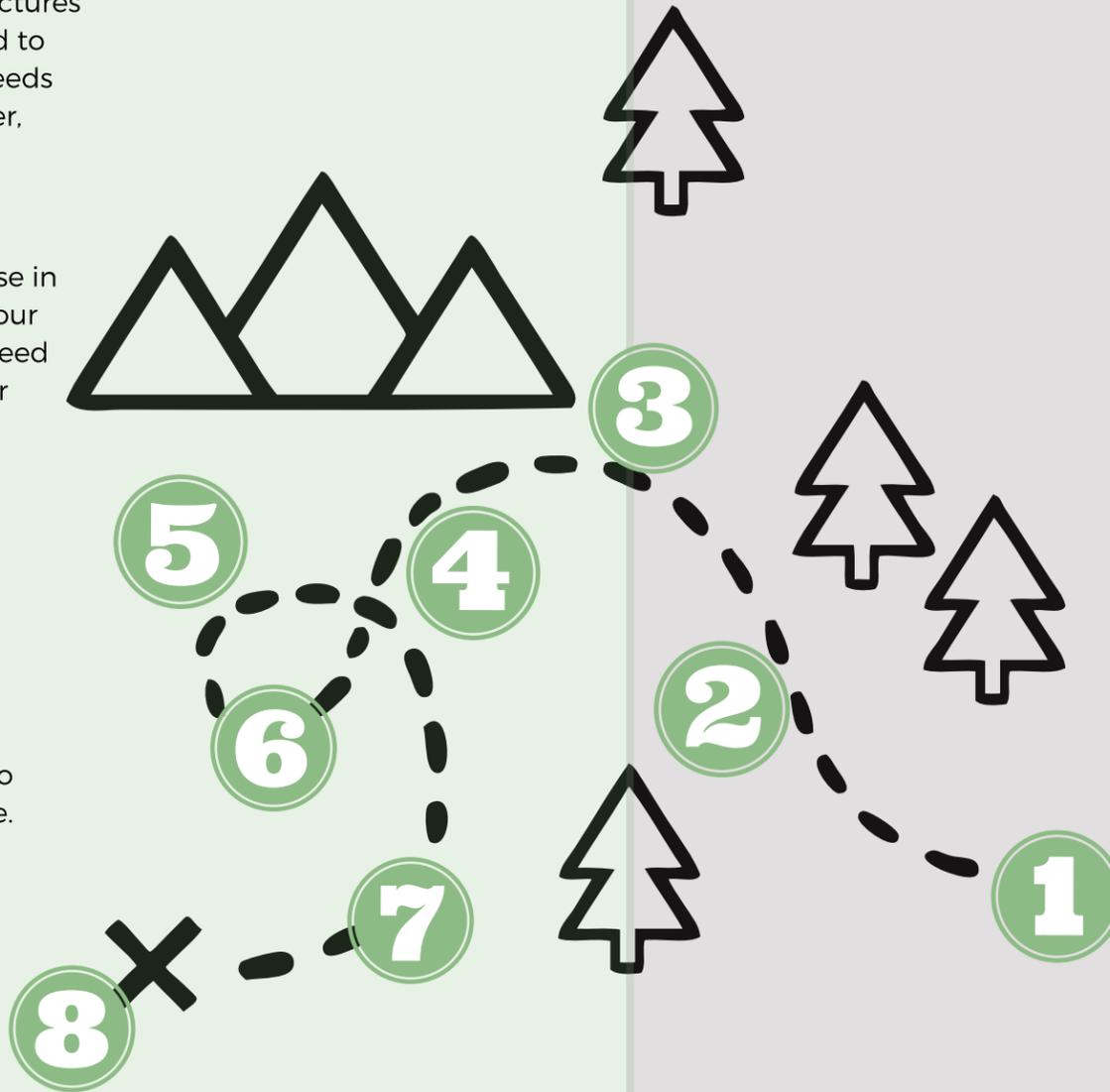
Make a prayer spinner. Gather pictures of people and other things you commonly pray for and glue them to a piece of cardboard. Insert a push pin in the center of the board. Then attached a paper clip to the push pin (You can add a cardboard arrow to make it look more like a spinner). When you are together as a family, give everyone a chance to spin and pray for the thing they spin that time.

4

Use your fingers as a way to remember what to pray about. Thumb- pray for those close to us. Pointer finger- pray for those who instruct us. Middle finger- pray for those who lead us. Ring finger - pray for a family member. Pinky- pray for a friend.

5

Try a breath prayer. Breath prayers intentionally connect your body with your mind, heart, and soul allowing you to calm down and rest. Become conscious of your breathing. Breath prayer reminds us we cannot live on just one breath of God. God is the oxygen of our soul. Breath comes from God. As you continue concentrating on your breathing ask God to reveal a both name of God and a desire or need for you. You might hear something like, "Beloved, you are enough." "Mighty One, rest." or "Jesus, have mercy". Breathe in the name ("Beloved"), breathe out the need or desire ("you are enough"). The easy rhythm of attaching a word or phrase to each inhale and exhale becomes a bodily expression of desire for God. It engages the whole self in communicating longings to God.



8

Create a family prayer journal. Assign a new person to be secretary each time you pray together. Monthly or quarterly go through your journal to remind everyone what you have prayed for and show them how God is answering those prayers.

7

Read Jeremiah 18:1-12 together. Now provide a lump of play dough for each family member. Ask each person to create a pot like the potter described in Jeremiah. As you are making your pot talk to God about what it means to be shaped and formed. Think about God's expression warning the Israelites to turn from and stop their evil ways. Was God angry? Disappointed? Tired? Sad? Exasperated? Compassionate? Use your playdough to show what that face looks like. Talk to God about how you see and feel about how He disciplines us. How is it similar or different from how your parents have disciplined you? Now form a face representing the stubborn Israelites disobeying God. Talk to God about how often that face resembles your own. Use this prayer as a model prayer. Isaiah 64:8-9 "Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay. You are the potter. Your hands made all of us. Don't be so angry with us Lord. Don't remember our sins anymore. Please have mercy on us. All of us belong to you." Close by praying about how the Holy Spirit shapes us. Do you yield in God's hands? Shape the playdough into a vessel God can use for Jesus' purposes, workman created for His purposes.

6

Create a banner as a reminder of God's love for your family. Song of Solomon 2:4 says, "God's banner over me is love." In Hebrew this means standard- a pole with an identifying flag. A banner identifies either a group of people and who you are as a person. God tears down banners of lies and raises up banners of truth over us. God's banner of love means we are loved in spite of and in the midst of our failures. Create a banner to help your family see through a different set of lenses, God's identity for you. Look through Scripture to help you find and identify God's promises to His people. Display your banner as a reminder for each person of who God created them to be.