

Ten Simple Strategies for Prayer



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I know very few people who don't struggle with prayer. We know we should pray, but doing so consistently and fervently is not easy. Most of our praying is reactionary – that is, in response to a problem – rather than proactive, lifestyle praying.

Sometimes we try to fix this problem by seeking to become a prayer warrior overnight. That approach seldom works, and we get discouraged. A better approach is to build your prayer life one step at a time. Here are some simple strategies for increasing your prayer:

1. **Establish some prayer “triggers.”** Associate prayer with some daily activities, and then develop prayer patterns. For example, you might pray before you turn the ignition on your car. Pray as you cook a meal, clean a room, or walk on the treadmill. Let the “trigger” do what it's intended to do: direct you toward prayer.
2. **Use the church bulletin or calendar as a prayer guide.** Find the list of scheduled events for the week, and pray for each day's activities. If the young people are meeting on Tuesday night, pray for them. If the praise team practices on Monday, intercede for them on Monday. Let the bulletin or calendar information guide your daily praying.

3. **Develop a “Focus on the Family” prayer strategy.** Each week, focus on a different family in the church. Find out what prayer needs they have, and pray for them. Your small group might use this strategy to make certain every family receives prayer throughout the year. If so, be sure to pray for inactive families as well – only through prayer might they return.
4. **Follow the ACTS paradigm.** This strategy was the first one I learned decades ago, and it is still an effective one. Build a prayer list based on Adoration (praising God for who He is), Confession (admitting sin), Thanksgiving (expressing gratitude) and Supplication (praying for others). The intentionality of this strategy will help you stay focused during prayer.
5. **Use a “Focused ACTS” strategy for one week.** Use ACTS on Monday, but then focus daily on only one component during the rest of the week. On Tuesday, adore God throughout the day. On Wednesday, ask God to bring to light all of your sin so you might confess it. Thursday is for thanksgiving, and Friday is for praying for others.
6. **Do “drive by” praying.** Use your time in the car to pray. Watch for church buildings, and pray for the pastors of those congregations. Intercede for children and teachers as you drive past a school. If you pass a “For Sale” sign in your neighborhood, pray for that family. Pray for your coworkers as you park each morning.
7. **Set some “prayer power points.”** A prayer power point is a set time each day when you stop to pray. I find it best to set the alarm on my watch, and that reminder calls me away from my desk to pray. Just a few minutes set aside for prayer help me to re-focus for the rest of the day.
8. **Pray the “Model Prayer” of Matthew 6:9-13 daily.** I would not want this strategy to become routine and repetitious, but Jesus taught us to pray this prayer. Start each day with this prayer. Pause long enough to meditate on each phrase. Let the words become a genuine conversation with God.
9. **Pray as you read the news.** Whether you read the newspaper or read online, use the news to direct your praying. Intercede for countries in war. Pray for families affected by crime or natural disasters. Ask God to guide government leaders. Pray for missionaries in each country in the news.
10. **Send an email prayer to someone each day.** Take ten minutes, pray for someone else, and send a written prayer to that person. This strategy doesn’t take long, and just a few sentences of prayer will encourage somebody unexpectedly.

Remember, you won’t become a prayer warrior overnight . . . but start somewhere. Becoming a furnace of prayer begins with just a spark.