

Abide Practices: Prayer

Here is a selection of prayer practices that you may find helpful as you learn to abide. These are just examples, invitations to 'have a go'. Some may resonate more with you, others may not. Make any changes you want! The key is to find what works for you; a practice of prayer that helps you commune deeply with Jesus.

PRACTICE 1 – PRAYING THE LORDS PRAYER	
	As Jesus instructed, find a quiet place, free from distraction, and pray through the Lord's prayer, like this...
1	<p>"Our Father..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a moment and think about the truth of God as your Father, with good intentions toward you. Think about his heart towards you. Remember that you have his full attention and commit to giving Him yours. If it helps, imagine sitting with him, looking at him, making eye contact.
2	<p>In heaven..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a moment to think about the idea that God is all around you. Nothing can contain Him. Ask him to increase your vision. As you breathe in and out, imagine yourself breathing in and out more of the Holy Spirit.
3	<p>"Hallowed be your name..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend a few minutes just sitting with the Father in joyful, grateful, worship. You might want to sit in silence for a few moments. Or sing a chorus. Or give voice to things you're grateful for. Or praise God with specific things you love about him. If you are in a group, encourage people to make their expressions of praise and gratitude out loud, one at a time. (E.g. "Father, thank you for your kindness." "Father, thank you for loving me.")
4	<p>"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the Father to engage our hearts in God's purposes. Freshly submit your will to Him. Spend a few minutes asking for God's will to be done in your town/church/community/life. Think of <i>specific</i> things to pray for. If you are in a group, spend time verbally giving to God specific things in your life that you're wrestling with control over. A simple prayer of, "Your will be done in _____," is a great place to start.
5	<p>"Give us each day our daily bread..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thank the Father that he knows our needs before we ask and is interested and involved in every detail of our lives. Spend a few minutes praying for specific needs and wants in your life or that of your community If you are in a group, consider splitting into groups of 2-3 and having each person share one area of need in their life. After each person has shared, pray for one another, asking God to meet that need.
6	<p>"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend a few minutes in quiet asking God for forgiveness for specific areas in your life, and releasing others to forgiveness. Thank the Father for sending Jesus to die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. If you're in a group you could share the bread and wine with each other at this point.
7	<p>"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend a few minutes praying against temptation (the word can also be translated trouble) in your life.
8	. Close in a prayer of gratitude to the Father for hearing you.

PRACTICE 2-THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

The prayer of 'Examen' was developed by Ignatius of Loyola in the 15th Century. It is a simple framework for reflecting upon our day's experience and recognising where God was at work and where we might particularly need his grace to change.

Set aside 10 minutes at either the start or the end of your day to practice the Examen. It will be most fruitful if you adopt this practice every day for a week.

Perhaps keep a journal – to help write down your responses so you can share some of these in your discipleship or small groups or discussions with any partners in your life.

1 **REPLAY**

- What happened today / yesterday? Share your experiences of the day with the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you reflect.
- What did you enjoy? What was a challenge? What didn't go according to plan?

2 **REJOICE**

- Where has God been active in your life today / yesterday? Where did you feel His grace and favour? Where did you sense that God was particularly present?
- Give thanks for those things

3 **REPENT**

- Reflect upon any strong emotions you felt today / yesterday.
- Where did you feel emotional pain today and why was that? Where did you sin?
- Confess your sins and repent, accepting confidently that God in Christ will forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

4 **RESOLVE**

- How can you live differently today / tomorrow? Where do you need the help of the Holy Spirit?
- Give thanks for God's grace and go into your day or sleep with gratitude.

PRACTICE 3 - PRAYER MEDITATION

Our imagination, rightly informed and rooted in God's word, can help us to commune deeply with Jesus. Using our imagination or 'picturing God or truths about him' in a certain way can help anchor our thoughts and centre our attention on Him, in a way that perhaps intellectual understanding sometimes doesn't.

Set aside some time in quiet to ask the Holy Spirit to use your imagination to enter into a deeper dialogue with Jesus.

1 Imagine the nicest and safest place you can be on your own. It needs to be a quiet place

2 Sit, walk, run, do whatever you do in this place on your own

3 Listen to the thoughts that distract you from this place and imagine writing them down

4 Invite Jesus into this space and sit as close as you can imagine to him

5 Share what you have written down and explain to him what these distractions mean to you

6 For each distraction or emotion listen to what he says to you as the antidote: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness and self control.

7 Ask him to make your joy complete and ponder on receiving this full blessing

8 Tell him why you love him

9 Listen to him telling you why He loves you

10 Enjoy his love and peace for you

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