



# 16 Secrets for an Effective Prayer Life

By Dick Eastman in *Every Home for Christ*  
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Because praying is the most important thing we do, and because true praying is strenuous, some people rest for just a few minutes before they pray so they can be at their best for their most meaningful work. God gives fantastic answers. Praying is exciting and meaningful when you do it the way Christ taught.

1. **Make time for prayer.** Unless it is a habit, your prayer life will always suffer. The solution is to develop a habit of consistent prayer. David says, “Morning by morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; morning by morning, I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation” (Psalm 5:3). David had learned the value of having systematic, daily prayer. Don’t just try to find time—make time for prayer daily.
2. **Find a quiet place for prayer.** To enhance your prayer life, we recommend you find a special place for prayer. Jesus said, “When you pray, go into your room...” (Matthew 6:6). Our Lord was not speaking of just a good attitude for us to have in prayer, but also a specific place where we should have our prayer time. Jesus not only talked about this but also practiced it. Every Christian ought to have a special place for prayer.
3. **Recognize God for who He is.** Whenever you pray, you should always begin by recognizing God’s nature since it is exactly that—His nature—that gives us the confidence that He will answer our prayers. This is called praise. The model prayer—the Lord’s Prayer—begins and ends with praise. Praise is the gateway into heaven (Psalm 100:4). “A” is for adoration.
4. **Confess your failures.** Early on in your prayer time each day, you should also consider the matter of confession. The psalmist reminds us, “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (Psalm 66:18). Scripture makes it clear that unconfessed sin blocks the channel between God and the person praying. Making a habit of daily prayer gives us a special time to evaluate our spiritual condition. Confession is a prerequisite to powerful praying. Willful sin and prayer are completely incompatible. This time of self-examination is a vital part of our prayer lives. “C” is for confession.
5. **Thank God for what He has done.** Not only should prayer begin and end with praise, but it should be seasoned throughout with thanksgiving. Praise is defined as adoring God for what He is; thanksgiving is thanking God for what He has done. This involves specifics. The next time you pray, make a mental list of everything God has done for you and all the gifts He has given you. Gratitude is a great atmosphere in which to petition the Father. “T” is for thanksgiving.
6. **Bring God your needs and petitions.** Pray alongside God’s Word. George Mueller, the great orphanage leader of the 19th century, was known for his tremendous faith in God as well as his powerful prayer life. Without a doubt, the

secret to his success lay in the fact that George Mueller never prayed without an open Bible. He had learned the power of God's words to Jeremiah, "Is not my word like fire...and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces" (Jeremiah 23:29). "S" is for supplication. Together, these four— adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication—make ACTS, an acronym that provides a great structure for prayer.

7. **Don't give up.** Jacob provides us with a unique example of someone who persisted until he received the blessing he desired from the Lord. He said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me" (Genesis 32:26). Many believers begin their journey of prayer with great intentions, only to give up when the going gets rough. Persistence is a prerequisite to spiritual power. When it comes to prayer, we must declare as the same thing the psalmist did: "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is steadfast" (Psalm 57:7). Do everything you can to strengthen your prayer life. It is true that more things are wrought in this world through prayer than through dreams.
8. **Meditate in God's presence.** Think about what you are reading in Scripture and how it applies to your life personally. Meditation is not only meaningful but vital to balanced praying. The book of Psalms begins with this statement, "Blessed is the man that... delights in the law of the Lord; and on His law he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:1, 2). The only verse in the Bible that mentions success is a command to meditate day and night on God's Word (Joshua 1:8). Ask yourself what you have learned about God from the passages of Scripture and how He is speaking to you.
9. **Sing a new song.** Many Christians find it a joy to sing aloud during prayer. In the Bible, singing was a vital part of worship. Paul and Silas were arrested and jailed for preaching the Gospel (Acts 16:25), but were found singing praises. Since they did not have hymnbooks, their songs must have come from the heart. The psalmist spoke of this as "singing a new song." Because you are alone with God, you don't have any reason to be embarrassed doing this too. Make up simple choruses, sing some of your favorite hymns or choruses, and think about the words that come to your mind. It will be a new joy just between you and God.
10. **Pray a lot for others.** Every prayer you make should have a significant portion devoted exclusively to praying for others. Christ's model prayer does not begin with "My Father," but with "our Father." Not once does the prayer emphasize the personal pronouns "I," "me," or "my." Christ's prayer says "give us," "lead us," and "forgive us." The emphasis is clearly on others—stressing the importance of devoting much of each prayer time to intercession.
11. **Pray for ministry and evangelism.** When praying for others, keep in mind that nothing is more important than their spiritual well-being. Millions of people around the world are waiting to hear about Jesus. Pray for each of the pastors in your conference. Pray for the church officers and leaders of your local church and for the leaders in your conference. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13, Paul tells us to hold in high regard those who are over us in the Lord—our ministers, our pastors, teachers, and the other members of our church leadership. Pray for the clergy,

and for the lay members, that God will be able to use everyone to reach those without hope.

12. **Focus your prayers.** Intercessory prayer should be focused on specific needs, on our nation, and on every nation of the world. David prayed, “Thou therefore, O Lord, God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen” (Psalm 59:5). Pray for specific pastors and church leaders by name. Pray for the members of your church. You may want to divide the directory into sections so that each day some part will be covered in prayer. If you are praying for the world, you could divide the countries into groups of thirty, praying for one of these groups each day of the week. Each week you will be able to visit the entire world, country by country, in prayer.
13. **Plan your prayer time.** Develop a plan before you go into your prayer closet. If you write your prayers, take your notebook, pen, highlighter, and Bible. If you use a structure of some kind, such as the Lord’s Prayer, ACTS, or a prayer list, this may help you in your organization. Plan your time carefully and prayerfully, asking God to show you who to pray for and how to pray. Ask for His protection and guidance as you pray.
14. **Learn to fast and pray.** Fasting is the practice of deliberately abstaining from usual nourishment for the purpose of adding power to our prayer. Jesus made it clear that some spiritual victories can only come through fasting and prayer (Mark 9:28, 29). Set aside at least one meal per week, or even an entire day, for prayer and fasting. Focus this intense prayer on nations, individuals, or cities that seem closed to evangelism.
15. **Find a prayer partner.** Jesus, the Master of prayer, taught that praying with others increases prayer power. He said, “...if two of you agree on earth concerning any thing that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19, NKJV). Our Lord made it clear that special power is released when two people agree on a given matter. Find a prayer partner who can join you at the same time you pray, even if they live hundreds of miles away and have to do it by phone, or someone who lives close by and can get together regularly with you in person.
16. **Know the real secret.** Some have said that they believe the real key to prayer—to knowing God and getting His answers—is learned from Christ. In Mark 11:24 He said, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” The key word here is “desire.” If you don’t desire an answer to your prayer, you will probably never get one. Earnest prayers of faith for yourself or for others are meaningful.