



21 Days of Prayer: Pray First



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Table of Contents

- 2 Pray first
- 3 How to use this book
- 4 Creating a lifestyle of prayer

Prayer Models

- 5 The Lord's Prayer
- 14 Praying Scripture
- 25 Personal prayer focus

From the start of CedarCreek Church, we have made prayer a priority. In every situation, whether good or bad, we try to pray before we act. Many times, people act first and then want God to bail them out of that situation, but prayer should be our first response, not our last resort.

Understanding the necessity of prayer is not enough. In order for it to become a part of our life, it needs to become something we look forward to doing. Our hope is that this prayer guide will equip you to have a powerful, consistent prayer life. This simple prayer journal gives you a few prayer models out of the Bible and has some guidelines to make prayer more personal. This booklet is designed to bring joy into your time with God.

When you discover the beauty of daily conversation with him, you'll experience the presence of God in a way that will change your life.

Once you learn how to pray, prayer can become a part of everyday life. You will find yourself praying:

- Before the day begins –
- Before you go to bed –
- Before you go to work or school –
- Before you send that text –
- Before you eat, drive, or travel –
- When bad things happen –
- Before bad things happen –
- In every situation – **PRAY FIRST!**

Prayer changes everything!

How to use this book

We don't have to follow a specific formula to talk with God, but practicing different ways to pray can help us find deeper purpose and connection to him through our prayer time.

To get started, choose which model you want to use today in prayer. As you pray, focus on the process the model reveals, giving yourself time to pray intentionally. If your mind wanders, use the model to restore your focus.

The goal of using this guide is not to add pressure or overwhelm you. The goal is simply to get comfortable with different biblical models of prayer and for your prayer life to become more natural, effective, and enjoyable. To make your prayer time even more meaningful, you can write notes and prayer requests and play worship music. The important step is committing to regularly entering God's presence through prayer.

The heart of this guide is to help you find a new level of purpose, effectiveness, and enjoyment in your prayer life. While prayer does take commitment and can require discipline to develop into a daily habit, we also want to remember that it's a privilege to be able to come to God in prayer.

Creating a lifestyle of prayer

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. **MARK 1:35 NIV**

Prayer is most effective when it isn't something we do every now and then, but when it's a lifestyle we cultivate. To understand how to have a lifestyle of prayer, we can look at the example Jesus gave during his life on earth.

Have a certain TIME

Jesus got up early in the morning to spend time with his heavenly Father. Make a daily appointment with God – whether it's first thing in the morning, at lunch, or in the evening – and faithfully keep it.

Have a certain PLACE

Jesus had a specific place he went to pray. Having a designated place to pray helps us remove distractions and frees us to worship and pray out loud.

Have a certain PLAN

When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, he gave them a prayer outline. We call it the Lord's Prayer. This outline, along with several other tools, is available in this guide. As we pray every day, our plans for our prayer time can vary, maybe including worship music, Bible reading, and quiet time to listen to God. It doesn't always have to look the same; it just helps when we have a plan for connecting regularly with God.

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is often recited in churches or at religious events, but there's so much more to this prayer. Jesus provided this model as an outline to teach us how to pray in a way that connects us to God and empowers us to accomplish great things through him. This model takes us through each part of the Lord's Prayer, showing us how to pray the way Jesus instructed.

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray..." LUKE 11:1 NIV

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." MATTHEW 6:9-13 NKJV

01

Connect with God relationally

“Our Father in heaven”

God isn't interested in us practicing religion; instead, he desires a relationship with us. God has adopted us as his children and loves for us to call him our Father. Starting our prayer time by acknowledging our relationship with God is powerful for us and delights him as well.

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." **ROMANS 8:15 NLT**

Proclaim your intimate relationship with God, addressing him lovingly as your Father and thanking him that you are his child.

PRAYER:

“Father, I come to you in prayer today thankful that I am your child. You have forgiven me and adopted me as your own. You have made me righteous and restored our relationship. I am so grateful that you are my Father. Thank you for loving me. I love you.”

02 Worship his name

“Hallowed be your name”

God loves when we worship him, and there is power in his name. Here is a list of some of his names to help us worship him specifically and personally:

God is **righteousness** – He makes us clean

God is **sanctifier** – He has called us and set us apart

God is **healer** – He heals all our diseases

God is **banner of victory** – He defeated our enemies

God is **shepherd** – He speaks to us and leads us

God is **peace** – He is our peace in every storm

God is **provider** – He supplies all of our needs

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. **PROVERBS 18:10 ESV**

Speak God’s names out loud. When we proclaim who he is, we not only worship him, but we also remind ourselves how powerful and great our God is.

PRAYER:

“God, I am in awe of you. Your name is a strong tower, a place of protection and safety for me. I praise you as my healer, my shepherd, and my banner of victory. You are my peace, my provider, my righteousness, and my sanctifier. Your name is great, and I worship you.”

03 Pray his agenda first

“Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

Part of being a child of God is caring about what he cares about. We know his will is perfect, and we acknowledge his wisdom and sovereignty when we pray his agenda first.

He will always give you all you need from day to day if you will make the Kingdom of God your primary concern. **LUKE 12:31 TLB**

Spend time focusing on what God is focused on.

His priorities include:

- Saving the lost
- Being in relationship with his children
- Accomplishing his purpose in our lives

PRAYER:

“God, I recognize there is no better plan on earth than yours, and I pray for your will to be done in my life (name the areas of your life where you need more of God’s presence today) and in our world. This world is lost and needs you desperately, and I pray for every person to know you as their personal Lord and Savior. I pray for the leaders in my life (pray specifically over parents, spiritual leaders, government leaders, employers, and any other leaders in your life), that you would give them supernatural wisdom and discernment as they lead. Father, I give my life to you again today. Have your way in my life! Anything you want to do in me or through me, I will do. I ask for wisdom and clarity today as you show me my next steps.”

04 Depend on him for everything

“Give us this day our daily bread”

God promises to supply all our needs; he wants us to come to him with our problems, needs, and desires and to trust him to provide.

I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth! **PSALM 121:1-2 NLT**

Ask God for what you need today. It may help to write down the concerns weighing on your mind or the desires of your heart. You can bring them to God and trust him enough to hand them over to him fully. It may help to open your hands before God to physically show your surrender to him. Problems can either be ours or God's; they can't be both.

PRAYER:

“Father, I acknowledge that everything I need today will come from you. You made the heavens and the earth; you are more than capable of handling any situation I'm dealing with, so I give it to you completely. (Specifically talk to God about what is on your mind and heart right now and give it to him.) I look to you to help me, sustain me, and give me your peace. Remind me of your hope and power today. Thank you in advance for taking care of my needs.”

05 Forgive and be forgiven

“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”

God has offered us complete forgiveness, and we can receive it at any time. When we turn away from our sins and receive his forgiveness, our hearts are more prepared to forgive others as well.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 JOHN 1:9 NIV

Ask God to check your heart and life and show you areas where you might need to ask for forgiveness from him. Then, it is your turn to forgive those who have offended you. We can even choose to forgive people in advance. Ask God to forgive you and to help you forgive others.

PRAYER:

“God, thank you so much for offering me the gift of forgiveness. Show me any areas in my life that I need to bring before you in order to receive forgiveness and healing. I confess that I have been struggling with sin (talk to God about any areas of sin in your life), and I know that you want me to be clean again. Please forgive me for my sin. Thank you for showing me unfailing grace. As you have so freely forgiven me, I also want to freely forgive others. Please help me let go of all of my offenses. I release to you those who have hurt me, and I trust you to handle those situations according to your perfect will.”

06 Engage in spiritual warfare

“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”

The Bible makes it very clear that we have an enemy who is trying to steal from us, kill us, and destroy us. As we pray, we take our stand against the enemy and fight from a place of victory through Jesus as we're empowered by his Holy Spirit. There is power in God's word, and every lie the enemy has told us can be replaced with God's truth.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **EPHESIANS 6:12 NIV**

By recognizing that the enemy wants to destroy you, you can shed light on his lies and claim God's truth over your life. Ask God to show you any lies you're believing or areas of warfare happening in your life. Ask him to expose the enemy and to help you understand and receive his truth. Simply speaking the name of Jesus has great power in the spiritual realm. The Bible tells us in James 4:7 that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us. Through prayer, we can resist him and walk forward in freedom.

PRAYER:

“God, I recognize that my struggles today aren’t against the people or circumstances around me, but against the enemy. Please help me to see how the enemy is lying to me. Help me to recognize his lies, take them captive, and make all of my thoughts obedient to the truth of your word. (List out any specific areas God shows you where you have believed a lie that needs to be replaced with his truth.) While the enemy wants to destroy me, I know that you came to give me life to the fullest. I speak the name of Jesus over my life and declare that no weapon formed against me will prosper. I don’t have to fear the enemy because the one who is in me is greater than the one who is in the world.”

07 Express faith in God's ability

“For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”

God is more than able to move in every situation, and ending our prayer time claiming his authority and power focuses our minds on the truth and hope of who he is and what he can do.

Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. **JEREMIAH 32:17 NIV**

Remind yourself of God's limitless power and then return to praising him and declaring your faith in him:

- “Yours is the Kingdom” – all authority belongs to you
- “Yours is the power” – all mightiness flows from you
- “Yours is the glory” – your victory will be complete

PRAYER:

“Father God, nothing is too hard for you! Through your great power, all things are possible. All authority is yours, all might is yours, and I know that your victory will be complete. You are amazing, and I worship you. I praise you for your power and presence in my life. You are my God, and you are worthy of all praise.”

Spend some time really thinking about all the blessings in your life for which you're thankful. You can write down a list, sing your own song of praise, or just spend quiet moments reflecting on your gratitude and praise toward God.

PRAYER:

“Father God, you are good, and you deserve all my praise.”

Praying Scripture

The word of God is one of the most valuable tools we have to build a dynamic daily prayer life. It brings power, truth, and encouragement to our prayer time.

Let's begin with King David's Psalm 23. Take a moment to read it, and then use the prayer on the next page as a way to use the psalm to have a conversation with God.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. **PSALM 23 NIV**

PRAYER:

“God, you are my provider, and I know you will take care of me. Thank you for guiding me to places of rest. You are my source of energy and passion. You keep me going and lead me toward a life of purpose and freedom. I know that even when I experience my darkest seasons of difficulty and challenge, I have nothing to be afraid of because you are with me. Your presence and power are a constant comfort to me. I know that you are preparing the way for me and that my enemies cannot touch me because you are taking care of me. I know that you have blessed me, and I thank you for choosing me and anointing me with purpose. Your blessings are so much more than I could ask for. I know that you are good, God, and that you are with me all the days of my life. You have chosen me, and I have chosen you, and that means I will be with you, in your presence, forever.”

In the following section, we will use several scriptures and claim their promises through prayer. You can make this as personal as you like. You will find the most benefit when you pray the scriptures that God is showing you in his word and that are connecting with you personally in your current season of life.

Come near to God and he will come near to you.
JAMES 4:8 NIV

PRAYER:

“Heavenly Father, you have promised that if I draw near to you, you will draw near to me. I need more of your presence today, and I am drawing near to you through prayer, worship, and reading your word. I open my heart to you and ask you to be near to me, changing me to be more like you.”

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. PSALM 139:23-24 NIV

PRAYER:

“Father God, I ask you to search my heart. If you find anything in me that is offensive, please show me and help me remove it from my life. Lead me to live a life that draws people to you. Help me live my life on earth in a way that impacts eternity.”

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. **JAMES 4:10 NIV**

PRAYER:

“God, you have promised that if I humble myself before you, you will lift me up. I recognize today that I cannot succeed on my own, and I need you in every moment. I humble myself before you, and I ask you to work in and through me today. My time, efforts, thoughts, and words are yours today. (Name specific parts of your day and give them to God.) Use me for your purposes, Lord. I trust that you will be with me and lift me up.”

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. **2 TIMOTHY 1:7 NIV**

PRAYER:

“Father, I know you have not given me a spirit of fear or timidity, but one of power, love, and self-discipline. When my mind feels out of control, I pray that you will renew my spirit and let power, love, and self-discipline fill me. Help me to look more like you every day. I declare that anything that is not of you has to leave me in Jesus’ mighty name. I proclaim that I do not have a spirit of fear, but I have a sound and healthy mind.”

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. **ROMANS 8:28 NIV**

PRAYER:

“God, you promise me in your word that in all things you work for my good. Right now, there are circumstances in my life that don’t feel good and that I can’t see an ounce of good in (talk to God about the specific situations that are causing you difficulty or pain). Even though this is how I feel, I choose to believe your truth over my feelings. When you say you will work in all things for my good, I believe you. Even in situations that seem hopeless, I know you are working on my behalf and that you want more for me than I could ever want for myself. Thank you for having a purpose for me and for working all my life circumstances for good.”

Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. **PSALM 62:8 NIV**

PRAYER:

“Father, in your word you invite me to pour out my heart to you. You are my refuge, and I know that anything I think, feel, or do is ok to bring to you. Knowing that you are a safe place for me, I come to you and give you everything on my heart (talk to God about the specific things that are on your heart today). From what is worrying me to what is delighting me, what I hope for to what I’m afraid of, I bring it all to you because I know I can trust you. Help me and guide me in every area, in Jesus’ name.”

The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. DEUTERONOMY 28:12 NIV

PRAYER:

“Lord, I believe you have everything I need and you want to bless me. You tell me in your word that you will open the heavens to bless the work I do. I know that without you, I can do nothing. I ask that you will open the heavens and pour out your blessings and power over me. I give my work and my efforts to you and I ask you for favor and blessing in anything my hands touch. (Surrender specific efforts to him.) May it be for your glory alone so that others may see your power and goodness at work.”

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 8:38-39 NIV

PRAYER:

“God, I am in awe of your love for me. You are so great, and I am so small, yet you love me fully. I remind my soul today that nothing can separate me from your love—I am so grateful! There is nothing I can do to win or lose your love; you love me without condition. Because I know nothing on earth, in time or space, or anything in existence can separate me from your love, I will live confidently and peacefully knowing I have always been and will always be fully loved by you.”

“No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord. ISAIAH 54:17 NIV

PRAYER:

“Lord, I know that no weapon raised against me will succeed because I am your child. I feel pressure in my life right now, and sometimes I feel as though life will overcome me. (Talk to God about the concerns weighing on you.) Even though I feel this way, in faith, I claim your promise that no weapon can overcome me and that any accusations that come against me will be silenced. This truth is verified by your love and saving power in my life.”

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 NIV

PRAYER:

“Father, my heart feels anxious (tell God what is giving you anxiety). I don’t like this feeling, but I’m thankful I can come to you and receive peace. You invite me to replace my anxiety with prayer, and even though my mind and heart are racing, I come to you knowing that you provide healing and calm for my soul. I lay down all worries, all my physical and mental anxiety, and all my attempts at trying to control things. (Tell him the things you are laying down right now.) I surrender it all to you. I need you and your peace, which transcends my human understanding. Even if things are unstable around me, I pray that your peace will be evident in my heart and my life. Guard my heart and mind, God. I trust that you are faithful, and I receive your peace in my life today.”

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” JEREMIAH 29:11-13 NIV

PRAYER:

“My God, I try to make so many plans for my life, but I know your plans for me are best. You tell me that you have plans for me to prosper and have hope and a future. Thank you for loving me enough to have a plan for my life. You have promised me that when I call on you, you will listen to me. Thank you for listening when I pray. I am confident knowing that I serve a God who cares about my life. I want to find you every day, and you say that if I seek you with all my heart, I will find you. Thank you for showing me the way to you. I lay my plans down at your feet and receive your plans for me (mention your plans and lay them down before God). I know that you see the big picture and you know what is best for me. I trust you, and I ask you to guide me toward your plans.”

Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.

HEBREWS 13:5 NIV

PRAYER:

“Father, I am so comforted by the fact that you will never leave me. You are always with me, and I am safe with you. As I go through my life and take on each new situation, I’m comforted by knowing I’m not alone because you are by my side. Help me feel your presence. When I feel uncertain or afraid, I pray you will comfort me through your Holy Spirit and remind me that I am never alone because you, the Almighty God, have promised to always be with me.”

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. MATTHEW 11:28-30 NIV

PRAYER:

“Lord Jesus, I am so tired and worn out. (Tell God the areas that you’re tired and weary.) I feel exhausted mentally and physically. Life feels hard, and I feel like I can’t keep up my current pace. You invite me to come to you when I am weary, and I fall at your feet desperate for rest, peace, and perspective. Show me where I am trying to do things on my own. Show me where I need to rest instead of strive. Teach me your ways. Show me how to walk in gentleness, humility, and rest. I know your ways are higher than my ways, and I pray that you will transform my heart and mind to be more like you.”

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

PSALM 91:1-2 NIV

PRAYER:

"God, I claim that I dwell in your shelter, and I rest in your shadow. I claim that you alone are my refuge and fortress. You are my God and I trust you. When I face anything that brings me uncertainty or fear (confess these things to him), I know that I can come to you as my safe place. Thank you for your strength and protection in my life."

The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. PSALM 145:13-14 NIV

PRAYER:

"Almighty God, as I claim the promises in your word through my prayer time, I praise you for your character. Trustworthy, faithful—that is who you are. I thank you that I can trust you to be faithful to me. I know that when I come to you with humility and a surrendered heart, you will lift me up."

Personal prayer focus

God has put us on the earth at this specific time for a reason. He says in Acts 17:26 that he determined when and where we would live. Knowing this, we can look at those around us at this specific time in history, and take personal responsibility to pray.

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. **1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4 NIV**

Pray for those in authority and those under your authority. Pray for those in your family and your circle of influence (anyone you're connected to). Write down the names of specific people and pray for them.

Those who need God

My Family

SPOUSE

CHILDREN

PARENTS

SIBLINGS

EXTENDED FAMILY

My Government

PRESIDENT

NATIONAL LEADERS

STATE LEADERS

CITY LEADERS

My Life

EMPLOYER

CO-WORKERS

EMPLOYEES

TEACHERS/PROFESSORS

CLOSE FRIENDS

My Church

PASTOR

GROUP LEADERS

GROUP MEMBERS