

SOME WAYS TO ENHANCE OUR PRAYER LIVES!

1. To begin: grasp afresh, deep down, the reality that it makes a *big* difference that we pray – James 4:2, Exodus 17:8-13.... Thank God for this incredible channel he has put in our hands!
2. Prepare to pray... slow down...(Find out what helps *you* come into reverent stillness in God's presence...)
Breathe out the frustrations of the day? Breathe in His love?
Open your hands downwards to release the day's cares.... Open them upwards to receive His care...
Kneel? Sing?
3. Ask the Holy Spirit of prayer to protect and direct your prayers.
Confess any sins that might hinder His presence... repent...
Receive His forgiveness, claim afresh His filling...
4. Are there pictures in the Bible that refresh you, that direct your thoughts to God?
 - The Shepherd, and you the lost sheep (Luke 15)?; or
 - You the lost ('prodigal') child, and the welcoming Father ('Abba'/'Daddy') (Luke 15)?; or
 - The Good Samaritan who finds and rescues you, the beaten-up traveller?; or
 - 'The King of Kings who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light'(1 Tim 6:16)
 - The Servant-King, coming in wondrous humility to wash your feet (John 13; Eph 5:26-27); or
 - The Spirit the river of life, flowing out and transforming all that is dead (Ezk 47)?

Or what else have you read in the Bible.....? or yourself, maybe, as a tree - roots sinking down into God's Word's refreshment (Psalm 1), branches reaching upwards to receive His love - or a rock by the seashore, battered by the waves yet drenched by God's sunshine (Malachi 4:2)...

5. *Worship Him!* Worship is where prayer starts (look at the flow of thought in Matt 6:9-13)
'Boast in Jesus!' (Phil 3:3)
Worship Him for what was in your Bible reading today
Speak thanks for what He has given you in your life these last few days (Matt 6:11; etc etc)...

If it's the kind of thing you find helpful, develop a plan to extend your range of worship - for example...

Sunday: Worship God in His absolute, eternal, glorious Majesty!

Monday: Worship God as your unendingly loving Father

Tuesday: Worship Jesus as the one who truly knew how to live

Wednesday: Worship Jesus for His loving death to take away your sin

Thursday: Worship Jesus - He really rose again, and gives us new life!

Friday: Worship Jesus - He's coming back, and there's going to be heaven!

Saturday: Worship Jesus for His loving plans, and His power, working graciously for *you*...

6. Move on to *intercession*: rejoice that God has given you a way to channel *blessing* now into your workplace, your relationships; your family, your street... to the people you were with yesterday, to those you will meet today...

- Pray for the *not-yet-Christians* you know (without this, not much will happen in evangelism: 2 Cor 4:4)... pray for them by *name*, for *specific*, imaginable steps closer to God....
- Pray for *your church*: for the evangelism – relationships – teaching – prayer life -- small groups – leadership – caring -- worship.... For your church's kids' & youth work....
- Pray for *missionaries* you know about (Rom 15:30, Col 2:1)... for their health, their spiritual lives, their friendships, their evangelism, their church, their local colleagues, their marriage, their children....
- Pray for our *country's leaders* (1 Tim 2:2).....

Be the person who encourages a group you're part of to keep making prayer central!

Prioritize your own time to be with God (be it short or long) (cf Mark 3:14). ***Pick*** when it will be this coming day, then ***Protect*** it. ***Hunger*** to grow in it (Matt 5:6). And God will use you through it more than you can ***imagine*** (John 15:7, Mark 11:24)!

Pete Lowman.