

Patterns and Resources

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produced this booklet. If you have any questions or would like to talk to someone about your spiritual life, you can email him at nick@hereford.anglican.org

Spiritual Accompaniment

One of the most valuable supports for our journey of prayer and deepening relationship with God is to someone you can talk to about your experience on a regular basis. Just like we have rooms in our houses to support particular aspects of living (kitchens for feeding, bedrooms for sleeping etc) so we have different relationships to support different aspects of our lives. Spiritual Direction or Spiritual Accompaniment gives this sort of space for our prayer and spiritual life. There are people who can help you find someone appropriate in the Hereford Diocese. They are very happy to have a conversation with you about it and suggest people to approach.

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Patterns and Resources for Personal Prayer

supporting spiritual growth



This is a collection of resources drawn together for personal prayer. It is offered in the hope (and prayer) that it might be helpful and only be used in so far as it is helpful. It is not intended to limit prayer in any way, nor establish some sort of benchmark to be lived up to!

Prayer

Prayer is a relationship, the most profound relationship available to us. It is the deep personal relating of our infinite God with finite me. Any description of prayer is inadequate, just as our descriptions of God are inadequate. How can we contain the infinite in words, and yet, we need help to open us up to the infinite love and grace of God that prayer offers.

Often prayer is conceived as asking, and Jesus in the Gospels encourages that. But its so much more.

Prayer is an invitation to give to God, our attention, our praise and reverence. Prayer is an invitation to receive God's free gift of love, compassion, hope...

Prayer is a participation in the life of God—the flow of love and life between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, out into the world, involving and energising us in this life.

This booklet offers some things that may help you explore this and empower you in living God's life.

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The Review of the Day: approach 3

At the end of the day we often find ourselves mulling over events and experiences.

This short period of reflection which can be done at any time builds on that natural tendency. But most importantly, instead of making our own judgement and analysis, we ask God to show us - to bring to our consciousness how the Creative Spirit has been working in the experiences of our lives. NB Resist the voice of your inner critic -let God show you all the nudges to greater life in the glorious imperfect human being that you are!

Some Guidelines to the Process

- Take time to relax - feel attentive and open
- Let the day 'play back'. Allow the moments and events which you enjoyed to come to consciousness - don't scrabble around - just wait and let what comes no matter how apparently insignificant or ordinary.
- Let the feelings of these moments, events, be really felt - re-visit the experience taking time to relish it
- Spend as long as you want with this.
- Let the day 'play back' again this time asking for enlightenment about the various moods and feelings of your day especially where there were shifts...
- Let yourself feel what you felt - it may help to express it - feel what you feel.
- Where did that mood or feeling come from?
- Where did that mood or feeling take me?
- Did it feel a creative movement/life giving?
- Did it lead to life denying actions/behaviour?
- What underlying attitudes are being revealed to me?
- What do I want to own and express which needs befriending and healing?
- What choices does this reflection time reveal to me about tomorrow?
- I ask God for what I need and want

The Review of the Day: Approach 2

Gerard Hughes SJ offers this Approach in his Book
'*Oh God, Why?*'

- Be relaxed and pray, '**Lord, let my whole being be directed to your service and praise.**'
- Let the day play back to you in any order. Look first at those moments you have **enjoyed. Relive them, relish them and thank God** for them. They are his gift to you. Avoid any self-judgment.
- Now pray for enlightenment, 'Lord, that I may see.' Look at your moods and inner feelings during the day, but without judging them. Moods and inner feelings arise from our desires. Our habitual desires become attitudes. When our desires/attitudes are satisfied, we are content: when they are frustrated, we become irritable. **We are praying to know the desires and attitudes which underlie our moods. Are my desires/attitudes directed to his kingdom** – am I living to praise, reverence and serve God, or are my desires to my personal kingdom – my comfort, my wealth, status, success, honour – wanting creation to praise, reverence and serve me?
- **Express sorrow** to God for not responding to him in the events of the day and beg his forgiveness, knowing that he always gives it. Thank him, too, for the times you have responded.
- **Ask his guidance for tomorrow** and entrust yourself to his goodness, 'like a child in its mother's arms' (Psalm 131:2).

Prayer - A place for you

In a busy world,
a place to be still
In a divided world,
a place to find friendship
In a confusing world,
a place to find direction
In a sinful world,
a place to know the love of God.

A place for loving,
when the world hates
A place for hoping,
when the world is cynical
A place for trusting,
when the world is suspicious
A place for forgiving,
when the world holds grudges
A place for serving,
when the world grabs
A place for healing,
for the wounds we carry within.

Seven Directions of Prayer

Reaching downwards and delving,
we are rooted in our true ground.

Reaching upwards and yearning,
we adore the One who is beyond us.

Being slimmed by admitting the truth,
we enter life by a narrow gate.

In opening our arms to our neighbour,
we forgive to seventy times seven.

Reaching backwards into the past,
we absorb what is good and are thankful.

Reaching forwards into the future,
we give of ourselves in trust.

Becoming still in the present,
we rest in the silence of being.

from 'Exploring' by Jim Cotter

The Review of the Day: Approach 1

From 'Sleeping with Bread'

Stop and reflect on the day that has passed...

Ask of yourself three questions

What am I most grateful for?
respond honestly to God from your heart

What am I least grateful for?
respond honestly to God from your heart

What do I need for tomorrow?
ask for this from God from your heart

*'Sleeping with Bread: Holding on to what gives you life'
by Dennis Linn, Matthew Linn and Sheila Fabricant Linn.*

If you pray in no other way, pray this way:

The Review of the Day

St Ignatius of Loyola, when asked by a busy Jesuit if it was okay not to attend mass daily responded, that if he prayed in no other way he should do the daily review. It's a prayer of recognition of God's movements in your experience. Just as the disciples on the Emmaus road, said to each other as they rushed back to Jerusalem 'didn't our hearts burn within us', recognising as they looked back at their experience that something within them noticed Christ's presence, so we can as we look back at our day.

At the end of the day we often find ourselves mulling over events and experiences. This short prayer exercise, sometimes known as the Examen of Consciousness builds on that natural tendency to play back the day. Most importantly, instead of making our own analysis and judgements, we ask **God** to **show us** how he has been at work in the details, the moods and feelings of the day.

This is a non-judgmental approach - a review of what we are aware of - to enable God to correct it and help us grown in our awareness of him in our lives.

It need only take 10-15 minutes.

Here are alternative approaches to this way of praying – a prayer of discernment

A Pattern

Approach

Jesus said "when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen" Matthew 6.6

- Set aside private space – that has boundaries so that disturbances and distractions are minimised. It may help to let others in your household know you are not to be disturbed, put the answerphone on, turn off mobile phone etc.
- It can be helpful to set aside a particular amount of time – and use an alarm clock to let you know when it comes to an end. That way you are freed from having to watch the time.
- Be aware you are coming to a place of deeper relating to God.
 - * Who am I – that is coming to this time?
 - * How am I? What is my desire?
 - * Pray initially from this personal awareness.

Stopping

Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.
Mark 6.31

- Take time to rest in this space – to relax and become stiller within.
- Use music, bodily relaxation, attentiveness...

Engaging

- Take up whatever way of praying you have chosen for the heart of your time of prayer.
- The choice is endless – using scripture, poetry, music, creative arts, silence, intercession...

Reviewing

- Take time to look back over your time of prayer. Notice its movement, and notice your inner attitude and feelings. Ponder what they may be revealing to you.

Concluding

- Take time to talk with Jesus – having a heart to heart conversation about your experience. Ask him for whatever grace or help you seek as a result of your prayer and as you look ahead.

God beholding you... and smiling.

Anthony de Mello

Approach

You are my child in whom I am well pleased

Mark 1.11

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you, remain in my love

John 15.9

Where you are, (however unchosen) is the place of blessing
How you are, (however broken) is the place of grace
Who you are, in your Becoming, is your place in the Kingdom.

Margaret Silf

You do not
have
to change
for God
to love
you.

Anthony de Mello sj

I weave a silence on to my lips
I weave a silence into my mind
I weave a silence within my heart
I close my ears to distractions
I close my eyes to attractions
I close my heart to temptations

David Adam

Calm me, O Lord, as you stilled the storm,
Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm,
Let all the tumult within me cease.
Enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

David Adam

You Lord are in the world
Your presence fills it
Your presence is PEACE
You Lord are in this place
Your presence fills it

Journaling

- Keeping notes of your experience of prayer, review and colloquy can be a significant way of maintaining awareness of your journey of prayer. It also gives additional engagement with the experience, deepening and reinforcing.
- The whole process of Review and Colloquy can be done with notebook and pen in hand – letting the writing become the colloquy.
- Find what works for you.



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Reviewing

The Review of a time of prayer

After your prayer, take time to stop and reflect on the experience.

This can be helped by jotting down notes as you look back over your prayer – pondering these questions
How was I as I came to the prayer? What was my mood, what preoccupations or feelings was I aware of? What did I want or hope from the time?

- How did the prayer time go? Were there striking moment? Did my mood shift? What feelings emerged? Did I sense God's presence?
- Was there anything to return to, to follow up on?
- How were you at the end of the time? Had anything shifted compared to the start?
- Are there things that you want to thank God for?
- Are there things that have disturbed you or left you feeling the need for 'light'?

Letting the review lead you into conversation with Jesus

The next step is to take what has emerged into conversation with Jesus. Share your thoughts, feelings, doubts, concerns, joys, confusions

Be completely honest carrying on a conversation, 'talking as with another'.

- It might help to imagine Jesus sitting beside you
- Talk to him openly as with a close friend
- Say it how it is – no need to watch you language!
- Ask for what you need.
- Perhaps end with the Lord's Prayer.

Your presence is PEACE
You Lord are in my life
Your presence fills it
Your presence is PEACE

You Lord are in my heart
Your presence fills it
Your presence is PEACE *David Adam*

Lord, my God, when your love spilled over into creation
You thought of me.

I am from love of love for love

Let my heart, O God,
always recognise, cherish and enjoy your goodness in all of creation.

Direct all that is me towards your praise.
Teach me reverence for every person, all things.
Energise me in your service.

Lord God,
may nothing ever distract me from your love...
neither health nor sickness
wealth nor poverty
honour nor dishonour
long life nor short life.

May I never seek nor choose to be other than You intend or wish.
Amen.

Bergen and Schwann

O Spirit of God
By your grace inspire and inflame my heart with love
That my desires and actions may be directed towards your praise and glory.
Amen.

Lord, direct all that is in me to your praise and glory.
Amen.

Stopping

Ways of stilling and centring

Listening to sounds

From outside the room
From inside the room
From within you
Your breathing
Your heartbeat

Your body – and its tensions

Move from the top of your head down to your toes slowly part by part, becoming aware of any tensions and aches. With each tense and relax a couple of times, and then move on.

Breathing

Become aware of your breathing
Take a deep breath, hold it in for a few seconds, then let it out with a sigh.
Do this a few times and then let your breathing return to normal.

Music

Quiet gentle music like Taize chants
Recorded sounds of water or the sea
Instrumental pieces, Gregorian chant ...

Contemplative Silence

Simply being present to God, without words, is perhaps the most profound prayer. However letting ourselves simply be still and silent is not easy.

One ancient way that has been found helpful is to use a repetitive phrase to hold our minds and to come back to when distractions have led us away from our focus.

The Jesus Prayer has a long history as a prayer for carrying contemplative prayer. The words are

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the living God
Have mercy on me
A sinner

This can be quietly repeated with the rhythm of our breathing.

There are many other possibilities, words and short phrases from scripture, including

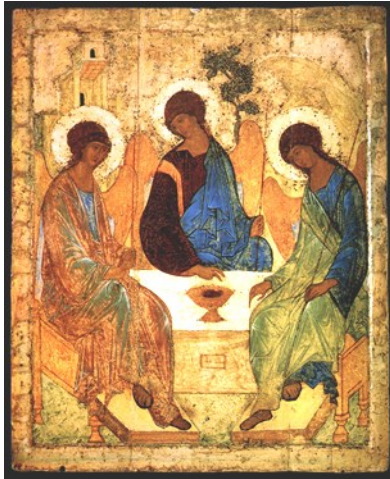
Jesus
Father
Maranatha
The Lord's my Shepherd

...

Being With God

Using a picture or Icon

Icons are sometimes called 'windows on God' as they invite us to look through them to the reality of God beyond them.



Rublev's Icon of the Trinity invites us to join in the circle of the community of the Trinity – to be present and part of the divine dance – Father, Son, Holy Spirit and you.

Sieger Koder's 'Washing of feet' invites us to be Peter, letting Jesus wash our feet. Perhaps, as the picture shows have one hand drawing Jesus and another one pushing him away.



we

There are many other works of art that can draw us into being present to God's love and grace.

Engaging: Approaches to Prayer

Some ways of giving focussed attention to God.

Prayer is a two way process – our heart and soul in communication with God, it can involve us

- speaking to God
- listening and receiving from God
- being present to God's eternal presence

Often the most important is our receiving from God. Can you let yourself simply stop and receive the flow of God's love for you?

All of these approaches can be used as the central engagement in a time of prayer. They can be done in 10 to 20 minutes.

When taking up any approach, decide beforehand which you are going to use and how much time you will give to it. Stick to that time. (It can be helpful to use a timer to indicate when your time is up, so that you don't have to be watching the clock, but can simply enter into prayer and focus on that.)

Praying with Scripture – Two Approaches

1. Imaginative Contemplation of Scripture

In imaginative contemplation, we enter into a life event or story passage of scripture. We enter into the passage by way of imagination, making use of all our senses.

Through contemplation, we are able to 'recall and be present at the mysteries of Christ's life'. The Spirit of Jesus, present within us through Baptism, teaches us, just as Jesus taught the apostles.

The Spirit recalls and enlivens the particular mystery into which we enter through prayer. He brings forward the particular event we are contemplating and presents Himself within that mystery.

A Method

(These are guidelines to help you get into this way of praying.... not structures to be kept rigidly!)

Spend a little time coming to relaxed attentiveness

Read the passage a few times to familiarise yourself with it, then put it to one side.

Ask for what you desire – perhaps 'help me know you better Jesus'

Start to imagine the event happening **now**.

Take time to see in imagination the place, the features....

What kind of day is it? Feel the breeze, or the sun on you, listen to the sounds, use touch, taste, smell if it helps this scene become present to you.

It can help attentiveness to ask yourself of any scene, who is present, what are they doing, what are they saying?

Actively participate in the scene... talk with the characters in the scene... talk to Jesus...

Whatever happens, spend a little time at the end of the prayer period being with Father, Son or Holy Spirit. Be as you would with a good friend, sometimes talking, sometimes listening, sometimes being together in silence. Speak from the heart, simply and honestly.

Some passages to use:

- Baptism of Jesus
- John's disciples follow Jesus
- Blind Bartemeaus
- The Woman with a haemorage
- Jesus anointed by Mary

2. Lectio Divina – 'Holy Reading'

Sometimes called 'Feasting on the Word' this has four stages

- Lectio (read) – taking a bite
- Meditatio (meditate) – chew it over
- Oratio (pray) – savour the essence
- Contemplatio (contemplate) – digest

Taking a bite (Lectio):

Read the passage, slowly, (without working at understanding it – this is not bible study).

Notice any words, phrases or images that seem significant.

You may read it several times over as you seek to be aware of what the passage is offering you.

Chewing it over (Meditatio):

Gently give time to the word, phrase or image that has been significant as you read the passage.

Let your mind and heart engage with this, letting its meaning for you emerge.

Savour the essence (Oratio):

How do you respond to what has emerged?

What do you want to say to God? What do you want to ask for from God? Forgiveness, help, strength...

Take time to speak to God about what has emerged and your response.

Digest (Contemplatio):

Let yourself move into quiet stillness, letting the effect and your response sink in.

Rest in God's love – letting God gaze on you, and you on God.

Passages to use

Isaiah 43.1-4

Hosea 11.1-4

Psalm 23