

Homework for Lesson 24 Prayer: Talking with God

When you pray, what do you say? Has anyone ever asked you to pray? How do you respond?

Find a piece of paper to write a letter. Before Twitter and Facebook and even phones, the best way to contact people that lived long distances was to take a piece of paper and write down thoughts and updates about our lives.

I want you to write a letter to God. Let God know your thoughts and give God updates about what is going on in your life. This is something just for you—you will not be sharing this with the class.

What was this experience like?

Is it easier for you to write a prayer or speak it? Why do you think that is?

We sometimes think of prayer as the formal exercise in which we ask things of God and perhaps give thanks but do we share *who we are* with God? Some of you might be thinking, "God already knows everything about me and my life." and you would be right, but God still wants you to share because sharing is a sign of intimacy.

There is not just one way to pray. Sometimes just saying thanks can be enough. Last week we discussed the different assumptions of God. Prayer coincides with these. God does want us to pray only when we need something. God does not want us to pray only when things are tough or when things seem great. God wants us to pray all the time... like breathing. Prayer is simply just communication with God.

Praying takes practice just like being good at conversations need practice. Remember that conversations have two parts - speaking and listening. Sometimes prayers can be simply being quiet and listening. As Methodists, we love acronyms! Remember the word A.C.T.S. when thinking about prayer:

Adoration: Give God praise and honor.

Confession: Tell God what is heavy on your heart.

Thanksgiving: Let God know what you're grateful for.

Supplication: Pray for the needs of others.

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

First is **adoration** or giving praise. I want you to take a moment and **think of one or two words that give honor to God**. Write them here.

The second part is the **confession**. This is probably the hardest one because this is when we let God know the burdens on our hearts. I want you to hold your fists tightly. Think of the stress you have created through bad decisions you have made. What are things you are not proud of? You could be upset with someone, you could have hurt someone, or you could just be angry about something. Do you have something on your mind yet? Now, silently share this with God and,

as you do, release your tightened fists and have your palms facing upwards. As you feel your hands relaxing, think of this action as releasing what is on your heart and giving it to God.

Think of something that you are truly **thankful** for. This could be your parents, your friends, and your awesome Confirmation class! Write them here.

The final part of prayer is **supplication** or praying for others. Who are you praying for?

There really is no wrong way to pray. God wants to hear from us regardless of what we say. God desires our attention, and prayer is a spiritual practice that can deepen our relationship with God.