



**“Because God has made us for Himself, our hearts are restless until they rest in Him.”
— Augustine of Hippo**

We read in Proverbs 4:23 that we are to guard our hearts for everything we do flows from it. If this is true we had better pay attention to our hearts. The heart in biblical times is not simply the place of emotion and passion but of action and will. The heart is this inner place where we commune with God and live out life.

In HEART, we will seek to answer the following questions:

- What is our treasure, for there our heart will be also?
- How do we bring the desires and dreams of our heart in line with the kingdom?
- How do practices of abstinence and engagement cultivate a heart for God?
- Why are shared spiritual disciples crucial for our hearts and our spiritual life?



In scripture the heart is a place of passion and of action. It is the place where life is felt and life is lived from. We see early in scripture that God’s heart is deeply troubled when he sees the darkness in human hearts. We are then led into the story of the flood and then an act of worship by Noah. As Noah worships God smells the pleasing aroma in His heart, and makes a promise to never act upon the earth in such a destructive way. In fact God blesses Noah and his family to be fruitful and multiply.

“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal.

Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.

Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

- Jesus

HEART: PRACTICES

Practices of Heart

Worship

To worship something is simply to deem something or someone worthy enough for your attention or investment. Worship essentially acknowledges 'Worth-ship'. The bible primarily refers to two kinds of worship:

1. the Worship of the one true God
2. the Worship of Idols or other gods

The scriptures continually invite us to worship in ways that revere God and cause us to humble ourselves. John the baptist expressed worship is a wonderful way that is worth us considering that, "He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less" (John 3:30.)

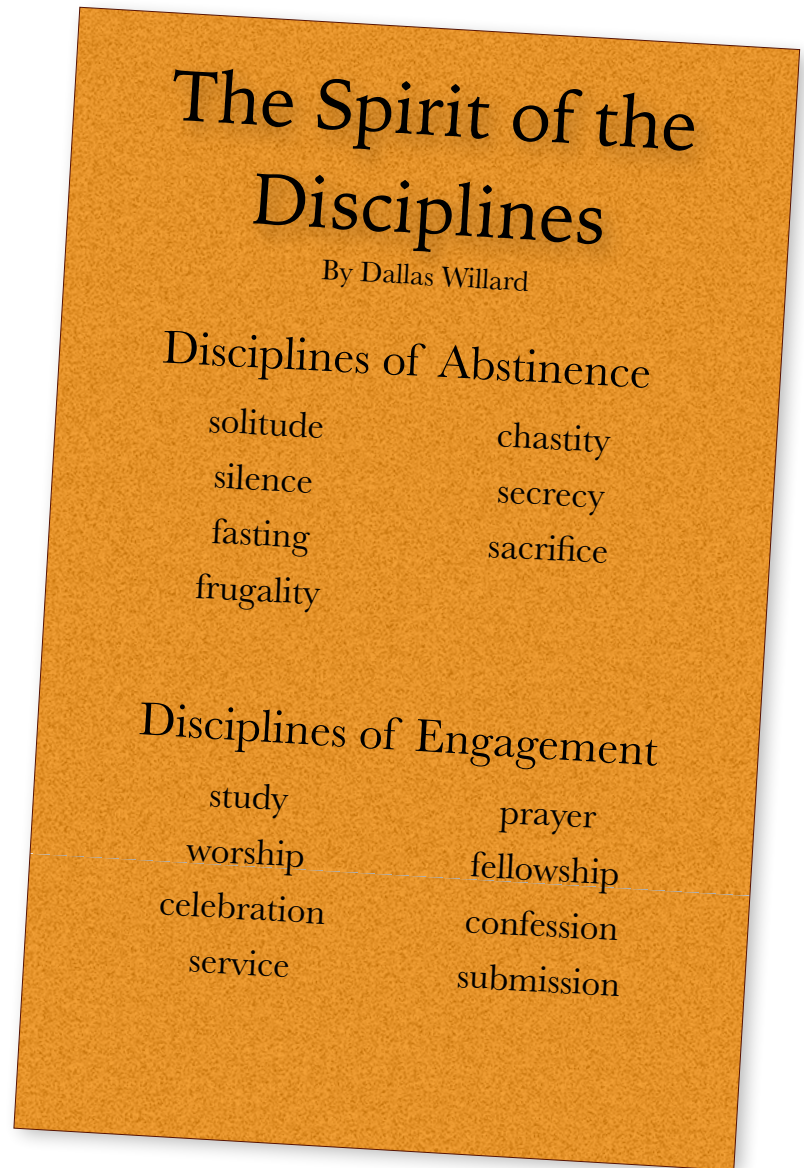
Prayer

To pray is to communicate with God. I like to think of prayer as keeping company with Jesus. The purpose of prayer is not to get something from God but rather simply

When we pray we enter the world of Jesus and the world of Jesus enters ours.

to be with God. If we do get anything from God through prayer that is simply called blessing. When we pray we enter the world of Jesus and the world of Jesus enters ours. It is a beautiful place of communion with God. It is a

wonder that it is hard to pray, but it is. It is a practice that when practiced we do grow in. Richard Foster encourages us to begin praying where we can, not where we can't.



Practices of Abstinence and Engagement

In *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard classifies the disciplines of the spiritual life into two groups: disciplines of abstinence and disciplines of engagement.

Disciplines of Abstinence are those in which, as you might expect, we abstain from certain things, namely, "the satisfaction of what we generally regard as normal and legitimate desires" (159). St. Peter is thinking of these sorts of activities when he writes: "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). Disciplines of abstinence are helpful in that they help us bring our normal human desires into right order, when often they grow inordinately important in our lives.

Disciplines of Engagement are the healthy counterbalance to and partner of the disciplines of abstinence. When we take something out of our lives, we must put something new and healthy in its place. We must not only stop doing some things, but choose to do the right sorts of things in their place. We abstain from our wrong engagements, and then move forward with new disciplines so that our souls are properly engaged with God.

HEART: THE POSTURE OF PRAYER

The Posture of Prayer: Come to Me

All who are weary and heavy laden are invited to come to Jesus and find rest. The first thing we can know about prayer is that we are invited to come to Jesus and to open our lives to him. The biggest barrier of prayer is not technique, though it is helpful to know the practical how to's of prayer. The biggest barrier is do we have the faith and humility to pray. Think of your posture of prayer for a moment. Would you say you pray with hands open or fists clenched? Are you truly will to trust Jesus with the things you are praying about or will we hold onto them. Then are we willing to take a step of faith in



the things we have prayed for believing and trusting that

God will do something in them. Jesus was praying to the Father when he declared to all, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." The work of prayer is the work of opening our hands and offering Jesus our lives, our hearts, and our feet as we live into the prayers we have prayed.



Meeting God in Prayer

Reflecting on our practice of prayer

When do you enjoy prayer?

When do you sense God's presence in prayer?

What kind of prayer is life giving to you?

What kind of language do you enjoy using in prayer?

Recall a time that prayer was really meaningful when you were alone? How about with people?

Have you ever been to pre-gathering prayer? A day of Prayer? Weekend of prayer and fasting?

When I am with a group of people praying I usually....

When I am alone and begin to pray I usually...

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts."

— Mother Teresa

"The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays."

— Søren Kierkegaard

"You must become greater and greater I must become less and less."

— John 3:30

Lord Jesus Christ
Light of the World
Fill our minds with your peace
And our hearts with your love

HEART: THE LORD'S PRAYER

Prayer as Faithful Response

Prayer is one of those practices that affirms our faith in God. The very fact that we pray is a kind of confession of faith. Put another way, to not pray is essentially to say that there is no God. How we pray marks us as followers of Jesus and not some other god. There was something in the very prayer life of Jesus that attracted the disciples and caused them to ask him the question, "Lord, teach us to pray." I am so glad they did for now we have this text and the Lord's prayer. Read through Luke 11:1-13 and consider these questions:

1. Why might have Jesus chosen these words to give to the disciples?
2. How does the story that follows relate to the prayer Jesus gives?

This text affirms the graciousness of our God. He is ready to give good gifts. But the ultimate gift that is given is maybe one that we don't always ask for. He gives himself. He gives the Holy Spirit. You may have heard people say that God always answers prayer it's just that sometimes it's no. I don't think that's how prayer works. I think from passages like this we can say that God always answers prayer because he always gives himself. It may not be the answer we want but it's his nature and I think when we discover that prayer is about God's presence we discover something amazing about prayer.

Prayer Experiment: the Lord's Prayer

Do you know the Lord's prayer from memory? Does your family? This prayer is a great one for our kids to learn. It's one of those prayers that we can turn to at different times in our life. Say this prayer with your kids, family, a co-worker every day for 1 month straight. We also have copies of *Praying the Lord's Prayer for Neighbors* at Southside which is another great 28 day experience of the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Luke 11: 1-13

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

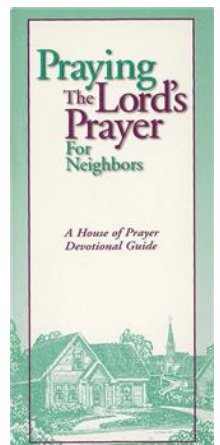
3 Give us each day our daily bread.

4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

5 Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6 a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' 7 And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"



MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

Morning and Evening Prayer

At one time for God's people there was a tradition of praying 5 times a day. The day began and ended with prayer as well as prayer at 9am, 12pm and 3pm. The three daytime prayers coincided with when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost (9am), when Jesus was crucified (12pm) and when Jesus breathed his last breath (3pm). It's really quite beautiful and meaningful that the time of prayer was connected with the life of Jesus. We at Southside have decided that morning and evening prayer is a practice that should be shared by all our community. We start our day with Jesus and ending it thanking him for his presence. Here are some simple helps for growing in our morning and evening prayer.

Getting Started with Morning and Evening Prayer

Morning Prayer

A moment or time to set our hearts on following Jesus and seeking first His kingdom. Morning prayer sets the direction and foundation for our day.

First Steps: Simple prayers.

- God show me what you are doing today and how I can be a part of it.
- This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.
- Lord make me an instrument of Your peace.

Then take time to be still and think through your day offering your appointments, business, opportunities, schedule, and events to the Lord. Pray about people you will see by name and ask the Spirit to equip you in those moments to worship and speak well as his witness. Pray also for the unplanned or divine appointments that will come your way this day. Pray you would be awake to the moving of the Spirit as you go about your day.

Next Steps:

A next step for those who desire to deepen the practice of morning prayer would be to broaden your language and intentionality in prayer. Broadening your prayers can come through using scripture, prayer books, a daily office and praying with other's. Intentionality in prayer is gained when you set a more disciplined rhythm of prayer. You may set out to pray for different people or areas of life on certain days. You may choose to engage different types of prayer on different days.

Evening Prayers

The end of day gives us space to look back and see God's presence throughout our day, give thanks, and confess any sin we feel that is appropriate.

First Step: Simple Prayers

Simple end of day prayers can be prayers of gratefulness for the day, for the work accomplished, for provision and that the Lord watched over you. Reflecting on the day and offering prayers like:

- God I'm so grateful today that you....
- Jesus I sense your presence today when...
- Thank you being present and opening my eyes when...

Next Step: Prayer of Examine

The prayer of examine involves reflecting on two questions: What brought me life today? What took life from me today? Reflect on your day and ask the Lord to bring revelation in these questions. Pray with gratefulness thanking God for the life giving moments. In praying in response to the moments that took life it may require prayers for perseverance, pleading with the Lord to change things, prayers to know God in the tough moments, prayer for healing, confession or other appropriate responses of prayer.

PRAYER AS SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Looking at the Spiritual Discipline of Prayer

thoughts, reflections and ideas from “The Life You’ve Always Wanted” by John Ortberg (chapter 6)

A number of years ago our whole church went through the book *The Life You’ve Always Wanted* by John Ortberg. It is a great resource for understanding and getting started with spiritual disciplines. These notes from chapter 6 would make a great discipleship conversation for growing in the spiritual practice of prayer.

Spiritual Discipline: Any activity that can help me gain power to live as Jesus taught and modeled it.

Prayer is perhaps the one spiritual discipline that most people feel guilty about. We think that if we really love God prayer should flow out of us without effort or discipline. That’s not the case, not even the case for Jesus’ first followers. The reality is, prayer doesn’t come naturally and it doesn’t happen automatically. Prayer is learned behavior. Nobody is born an expert at it. No one ever masters it. Thomas Merton, in *Contemplative Prayer*, says, “We do not want to be beginners. But let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners all our life!”

So how do I begin? . . .

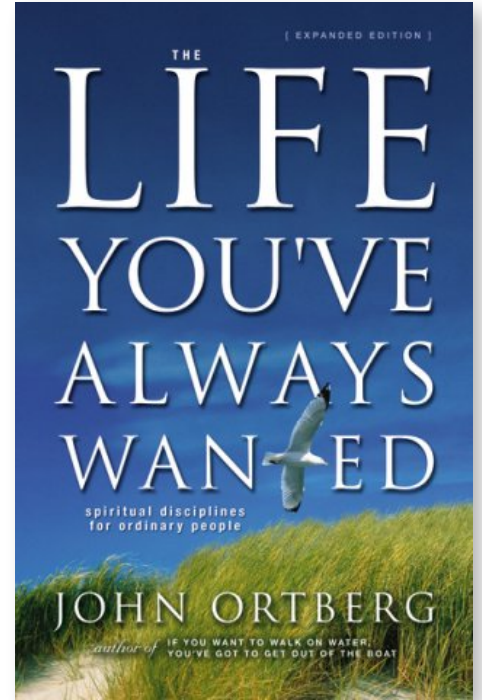
When and where should I pray? Try to choose the same time each day to have a focused time of prayer. What time of day is best? Well, when are you at your best? Give God your best time. Also, pay attention to the setting where you’re going to pray. Find a place where you will be free of distractions. Jesus had a time and a place (see Mark 1:35)

How long should I pray? Linette Martin, writes, “The way to begin is slowly. I advise 5 minutes a day. This may feel impossibly short, but it is better to get a short time established than to begin with a longer one that you give up later as being impractical . . . Set aside the same small block of time day after day. It can be done.” When you are tempted to quit, don’t play games with the pattern. Don’t say, “I’ll skip today and do ten minutes tomorrow.” And, if you do miss a day, don’t waste time feeling guilty about it. Go back to five minutes the next day. As habits are formed, then let desire for more increase the time.

Preparing to pray. Henri Nouwen once said that when you go to pray, thoughts jump around in our minds like “monkeys jumping around on banana trees.” So, at the beginning of prayer it is important to take a few minutes to “allow the monkeys to settle down.” Maybe do this by taking a few deep breaths and allowing your mind to slow down. Perhaps focus your attention on a physical object, like a flower or a lit candle. You may simply want to whisper “Heavenly Father” a few times until your mind is ready to go deeper.

Some thoughts on what to pray . . .

Simple prayers. Most people experience a gap between what they think they are supposed to pray for what they are really thinking about. Simple prayer is all about removing this gap. In simple prayer, pray about what is really on your heart (not what you wish you had on your heart). As Richard Foster says, “We bring ourselves before God just as we are, warts and all . . . We do not try to sort out the good from the bad . . . We tell God, for example, how frustrated we are with the co-worker at the office or the neighbor down the street. We ask for food, favorable weather, and good health.” Dallas Willard adds, “The way to get to the meaningful prayer for those good things is to start by praying for what we are truly interested in.”



PRAYER AS SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Looking at the Spiritual Discipline of Prayer Con't

thoughts, reflections and ideas from "The Life You've Always Wanted" by John Ortberg (chapter 6)

Pray for others. While simple prayer may be the type most commonly practiced in Scripture, intercession is perhaps the kind of prayer most commonly commanded in Scripture. When you intercede for others, the circle of your concern becomes expanded a little beyond yourself.

Prayer as relationship. Dallas Willard describes it as, "Prayer is talking with God about what we are doing together." Ortberg adds, "In addition to all the other work that gets done through prayer, perhaps the greatest work of all is the knitting of the human heart together with the heart of God."

Prayer as listening. Remember, you shouldn't do all the talking in prayer. Allow God to speak to you, through inner promptings or thoughts in your spirit, through the Bible, through nature, etc. Perhaps place an empty chair next to you or a lit candle to remind you that God is with you (in you) and that prayer is a conversation – speaking AND listening.

Pray the Scriptures. Pray the scriptures back to God. The Psalms are especially suited for this. How about the "Lord's Prayer" in Matthew 6? Practice lectio divina (see separate resource).

Make a Prayer List/Journal. How about choosing a different area of your life to pray for each day of the week. For instance, on Monday I pray for my family, on Tuesday I pray for my work relationships, on Wednesday I pray for my neighbors, on Thursday I pray for . . .

Notes on Prayer:

STYLES AND FORMS OF PRAYER

Styles of Prayer

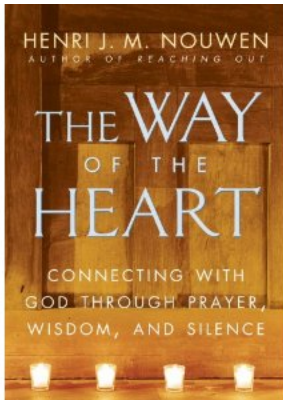
We pray to foster a relationship with God. Sometimes we struggle to pray because we haven't found the right language or posture to communicate or listen well. Some of us prefer stillness and silence while others communicate better with activity and movement. The only proper posture for prayer is humility. It is good to both understand your own style of communication and explore others. To the right is a simple chart to reflect a couple styles and environments for prayer. Which quadrant would you place yourself on the chart? Why? Is there a style of prayer listed below or that you can think of that would compliment where you have put yourself? Choose another quadrant to explore. What practice of prayer might you engage to grow and experiment another style of prayer.

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Personal The Closet		Communal Public
	Spontaneous On the Way	

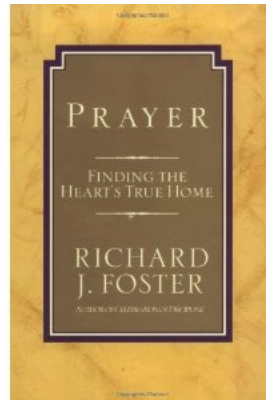
Forms of Prayer

1. Contemplative prayer
simple, silent, meditative, repetitive
2. Simple clear bullet prayers
simple statements of acknowledging God's presence bring requests, praise and petition in the moments of the day.
3. Listening prayer
an intentional time of waiting on the Lord, then praying in response to that which you have sensed God say.
4. Scripture prayer
using the scripture to influence prayer either in praying scripture directly or praying in response to the reading or reflecting of scripture.
5. Communal Prayer
praying with others, scheduled or on the way
6. Brother Lawrence Prayer
continuous awareness of God and a conversation with him all day and in all things
7. Prayer Books/Offices
a rhythm or scripted and organized prayers, meditations and reflections.
8. Prayer Walking and Wandering Prayer
active forms of prayer engaging the whole body and all our senses.
9. Praying in Tongues
an ecstatic form of prayer
10. Organized Prayer Models: ACTS
using simple tools or structure to engage a flow of prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)
11. Withdrawing Prayer
long and dedicated times of prayer practicing both waiting and speaking. A kind of conversational prayer. Often engaged in retreat or early morning, late nights, special days or prayer.
12. Morning and Evening Prayer
offering the day and reflecting on the day in company with Jesus.

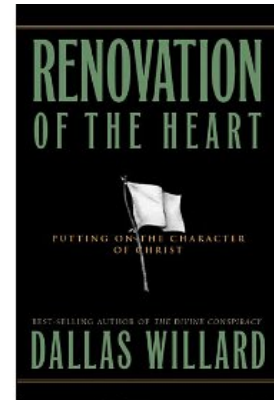
HEART: PRAYER RESOURCES



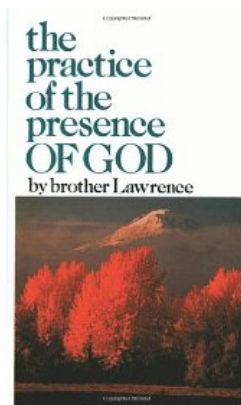
The Way of the Heart
by Henri Nouwen



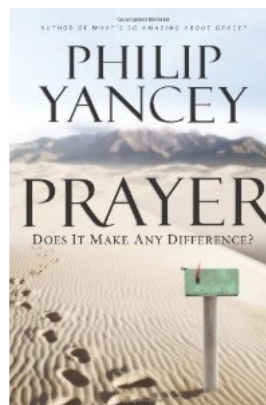
Prayer: Finding the Heart's
True Home
by Richard Foster



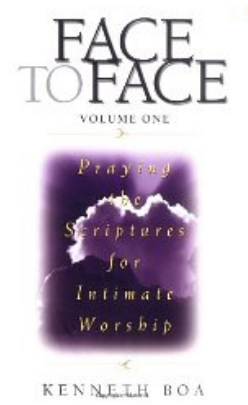
Renovation of the Heart
by Dallas Willard



Practice of the Presence of
God
by Brother Lawrence



Prayer: Does it Make any
Difference
by Phillip Yancey



Face to Face VI: Praying the
Scriptures
by Kenneth Boa

Southside Prayer Articles and Discipleship Resources

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- Prayers of Jesus
- Praying the Prayer of St Francis
- The Prayer of Suffering
- Prayer of Confession
- Prayers of Paul
- Prayer Walking
- Neighbourhood Prayer Stations
- Boa: Enemies and Sources of Spiritual Passion
- Guide to Lent: Prayer and Fasting