

A Methodist Way of Life for March 2025

“Pray” We pray daily

Introduction

There are two common understandings of how to pray:

1. To pray at specific times (alone or in groups, aloud or in silence, following patterns or freewheeling); and
2. To pray ‘like breathing’ – every second of every day you are in God’s presence.

Key themes

- God loves spending time with you.
- There are many ways to pray and it’s good to experiment to find ways that suit you.
- Prayer is simply a name for communicating with God. It’s not a daily tick box exercise but should be a way we build our relationship with Jesus.
- Daily prayer should be an invitation to spend time with God, not a burden that needs to be completed.

Relevant bible passages

Let’s explore three bible passages to understand the theological context.

Matthew’s Gospel Chapter 6 verses 5 to 9

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.

Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Paul’s letter to the Philippians Chapter 4 verses 6 and 7

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.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5 verses 16 to 18

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Reflections

Prayer is about noticing God. We practice what might be called ‘breathing in’ God; it is intentional in connecting us to God and informs how we live in the world.

Let’s think about how we pray and whether we find prayer easy or hard.

Let’s look at some of the ‘daily’ patterns we see in the Bible.

Daily labour may suggest weariness – prayer may sometimes feel like weary work. But daily listening is a liberating joy of attending to God, and daily asking is a reliance on God – an unburdening of ourselves to rely on God, rather than taking everything on ourselves.

The purpose of prayer is not to tick a box every day, but to live in communication with God. It's not about technique or accomplishment, it's about opening channels to listen and to ask for what we need. We all do this differently. Perhaps we need to learn how to listen more and ask more. Such communication is not a chore, but a delight.

Praying daily may begin with regularly reminding ourselves that God wants to communicate with us at every moment, because of God's great love for us.

Daily asking (Luke 11:1-14) – Our culture moves us away from the habit of expressing our need and asking for help. But prayer is for the tough times too. Jesus turned to God when drained (Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16), when making hard decisions (Luke 6:12), in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36), in bereavement (John 11:41).

Daily bread in the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:11; Luke 3) can stand for a range of needs; whatever we need for strength for the day. Just as in the wilderness when manna was given (Exodus 16), God's grace comes in small packages that are soon exhausted – precisely so that we will go back and ask for more. What do you need today?

Daily unburdening: Prayer is not meant to be a burden, rather an unburdening. It invites us to lay down our heavy packs. In many parts of the world, it is common to see people – mainly women – carrying enormous baskets on their heads. They may be setting off to work in their farmlands, carrying their tools, food and water for the day – or returning at the end of the day with produce to feed a family. Their poise is remarkable, and they negotiate obstacles or rough terrain with grace and ease.

But sometimes, if you happen to be looking when the basket is taken from the head and put down, you can sense a palpable relief at the unburdening. Is that not what prayer can be? The daily unburdening of loads too great to carry?

Ideas for discussion

- Think of your own daily, weekly or other rhythms. What is the value of such rhythms?
- Has prayer been easy or hard?
- How do we hear God's voice in prayers, in other people, and in the world?

Source: "A Methodist Way Of Life" Abridged and amended for BMC
www.methodist.org.uk/faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/ then search for "Pray".

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