

Get comfortable. The stiffer you feel, the more formal your relationship will be. Sitting is fine. If kneeling helps, do it. You might want to take an hour's walk as you talk with the Lord.

Next, try praying out loud, though not loud enough to disturb others. Being able to hear yourself pray; really helps. You'll find that your mind doesn't wander as easily and that you can pray more fervently.

Don't feel you have to do all the talking. Discuss something with the Lord, then be silent for a time. Sometimes God uses these times of listening to implant His answers in our minds. Gradually you'll find that prayer can be a conversation.

Finally, don't worry about keeping to the times suggested here. It's only to get you started, to help you believe you actually can spend sixty minutes in prayer. You'll find God will guide you in your prayer time. It's not a program, it's a growing relationship.

Now, go for it. Set a time when you will spend an hour with Him. You can't learn to pray from reading any more than you can learn to swim from a textbook. It's time to get into the water.

We can't wait until we feel like praying before we start praying. Prayer is no different than any other task we do. We may not feel like doing it but once we get started we find we enjoy doing it.

Hopefully the yearning of our hearts is summed up by Archbishop Tait when he says, "I want a life of greater, deeper, truer prayer."

<http://www.joyfulheart.com/maturity/prayer.htm>

How to Spend an Hour in Prayer

By Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

"An hour? How could I pray for an hour? I'd run out of things to say!"

Praying for an hour is like sitting down in a restaurant with a friend, rather than ordering a cheeseburger and chocolate shake at the drive-up window. Somehow, as you sip coffee together, you find a lot of things to say. And, it's a whole lot more satisfying than a wave and a "Hi-how-are-you?"

But if talking to God for that long seems intimidating, it's probably because we're still learning just to share ourselves with Him as we would with a friend.

The following suggestions are designed to help you take courage to try spending an hour with the Lord. After the hour, probably after the first 15 minutes, you won't need this outline. You'll find there's plenty to talk about without prompting.

Start by bringing along some things to discuss with Him: you're Bible, a hymnal, a world map or globe, perhaps a church directory, and your church's current prayer list. Then find a place where the two of you won't be disturbed.

1. Preparation: 5 min. Beginning Prayer.

2 ½ Min. Praise God for who He is. There is no one like our God. Ask God to help you spend this time profitably with Him. Ask for His guidance and invite the Holy Spirit to lead you. Give yourself to Him for this hour.

2 ½ Min. Confession. Spend a couple of minutes going over with Him recent sins which weigh on you. But don't dredge up old ones. Read 1 John 1:9. Ask for His

cleansing, then accept it by faith and thank God for it. God is far more willing to forgive than you are to ask.

2. Praise and Thanksgiving: 9 Min. Adoration

Lift up your voice in praise; there are just the two of you. Now start to thank Him for His goodness to you and your friends. Sing to the Lord using a hymnal or some choruses you know. There is a special sense in which God "inhabits" (KJV) and is "enthroned upon" (NIV) the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). As your heart begins to adore Him, you will sense His presence more deeply.

3. Petition: 9 Min. Pray About Life's Difficulties.

Use this time to talk over with the Lord your own personal struggles. Discuss with Him your relationship with your special loved one or spouse, your family, your hang-ups, your financial needs, your studies or job. But don't stop here. Be sure you go on to praying for the needs of others.

4. Intercession: 9 Min. Pray For Friends, Relatives, Neighbors, And Fellow Workers.

Don't just read a list of names to God; talk to Him about their lives and needs.

You can boldly ask Him for their salvation because Jesus died for them.

Ask God to bring Christians into their lives, to alter circumstances, and to give you opportunities for witness and sharing in depth. In Luke 11:5-8, Jesus taught that persistence is okay.

5. Min. Pray For Your Church and its needs: 12 Min.

- Call on God for a deep renewal of love for God.
- Pray for your pastor(s) and church leaders (worship leader, committee teams by name).

- Intercede for the Sunday school children, the youth, families, singles, widows, the sick and shut-ins.
- Call on God for an increase in giving so the church doesn't have to struggle so much.
- Pray for Christian organizations working with college students, children, the homeless in your community, with servicemen, and on college campuses.
- Then intercede for those you know in special need.

6. Pray For Our Nation: 8 Min.

Ask God to guide our president and legislators, our justices and judges, our governors and mayors, our police and firemen. Pray for righteousness in government and a public policy sensitive to the needs of the oppressed here and abroad.

7. Pray for Other Nations: 8 Min.

Ask God to work through fellow Christians throughout the world so that the gospel message of Jesus Christ is able to be shared with all people.

- Intercede for unreached peoples; call on God to send laborers into His harvest.
- Pray for missionaries, for third- world pastors and churches,
- For the people of God who are suffering persecution.
- Pray for peace.
- Ask God to give food, shelter and hope to the hungry.

Total = 60 min. Sixty minutes already? I've just got started!

A Few Suggestions

Here are some ideas that'll help you pray more freely. First, be yourself. Why wouldst thou pray like Brother So-and-So? Talk to God like you'd talk to your best friend.