

How do I develop a more active prayer life?

Objective:

Prayer is the way in which we come to know God, to be united with Him, and to know His will for us. Disciples don't just pray alone, they also pray together – and not just at mass. Just like we do at fathers team in our 6:03am prayer circle. How can you, as a disciple of Christ, form a habit of prayer on a daily basis?

Saint Theresea of Avila tells us that prayer, in it's simplest form, "is a conversation with Him whom you know who loves you." Prayer is a loving dialogue between you and God, it can be that simple.

Song Suggestion: Prayer of St Francis (Blue 368, Red 721)

Bible and Catechism Readings:

1Thes 5:17-18

Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for all is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

Mt 7:7

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For every-one who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish. If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him.

Eph 6:18

With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones.

Phil 4:6

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with Thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.

Catechism 2743

It is always possible to pray. The time of the Christian is that of the risen Christ who is with us always, no matter what tempest may arise. I time is in the hands of God.

It is possible to offer fervent prayer even while walking in public or strolling alone or seated in your shop....while working.. while buying or selling....or even while cooking.

Saint: Saint Joseph – Patron Saint of Hope and Prayer

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God...—Jude 20–21

Vignette:

Prayer is your connection to Jesus. Is Jesus your friend? If He is, then like all the other friendships you have, you figure out how to spend time with Him. Your time can be in 1 minute, 5 minute, 10 minute or 60 minute increments. Bob went on a weekend retreat and discovered a deeper prayer life. It can be in the car, the bathroom or a quiet spot in your home. Jesus is with us every minute of every day. Bob discovered that all he had to do was become aware of His presence. He would make the sign of the cross several times

a day to bring Jesus into his day. The more times he did this the easier and more natural his relationship with Jesus grew.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

Prayer connects you to Jesus. What is the goal of prayer? Why is prayer so essential to our life as a disciple?

How often do you pray? What benefits can you share from your prayer life that others might learn from?

Do you ever read the Bible? Do you read for long periods, or just a passage to reflect on? How can the Bible drive your prayer life?

What's the hardest thing for you in establishing a prayer life? Time? Priority?

Do we incorporate in our prayers gratitude and thankfulness to God?

Action Plan:

1. How can you begin a prayer life? It's like running a 5k or 10k race after not running for a long time. You have to build up to it. Can you take one day a week and pray or meditate on your faith? Perhaps Friday Rosary with Bob Hilmer is a starter. Keep at it until you get to an everyday prayer life.
2. Choose a prayer type that fits what you need and can do. Not everyone can pray the rosary.

Recall that there are 3 types of prayer:

Vocal prayer, founded on the union of body and soul in human nature, associates the body with the interior prayer of the heart, following Christ's example of praying to His Father and teaching the Our Father to His disciples.

Meditative prayer, we use our minds to ponder the will of God in His plan for our lives. What does God ask of us---aids for this are in Scripture, the holy Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day, and writings of the Spiritual Fathers and Mothers. Varied methods include Lectio Divina of St Benedict, the radical simplicity of Franciscan spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire.

Contemplative prayer involves hearing and obeying God's Word. It is a time of silent listening and love. Emptying oneself not for its own sake, but for the sake of being filled with God and entering into a deeper relationship with Him.

Author: Tim Arnold and Dan Lape....with the help of many before me.