

The Reason I Pray, Even When It's a Struggle

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Lee en [español](#)

“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”
Ephesians 3:14-19 (NIV, 1984)

Prayer has been one of the greatest challenges of my Christian life. While I know I'm commanded, encouraged, invited and often compelled to pray, I have still struggled with prayer. My struggle has centered primarily on three areas.

First, I have struggled with concentration. Why is it that as soon as I bow my head to pray, my thoughts start to scatter? Instead of truly communicating with God, I think about what I need to fix for supper, or what I'm going to wear to a special event, or when I can schedule coffee with a friend. Or I'm so tired that I simply doze in the quietness of the hour.

The second area I have struggled with is consistency — making time daily to meet with the Lord in prayer. How often I have been distracted by my chirping phone, or interrupted by my dog, or so busy I jump out of bed at the last minute and into my day without any real prayer at all?

And I have struggled with content — just knowing what to say and how to say it.

As I have sought victory in these three areas, I have asked God to give me solutions. And He has! Setting my alarm for an earlier time, allowing me to meet with the Lord before I begin my day, has helped with consistency. Writing down my prayers has helped not only with content but also with concentration. I find it helpful to include four elements in my written prayers: *worship, confession, thanksgiving* and *intercession*.

I begin my prayers by worshipping God for who He is, because as I focus on Him, it's amazing how my own needs and problems are reduced in size compared with who He is. Then I look at myself and confess the sin that now seems obvious, revealed by the light of His holiness and glory.

I do not beat myself up over my sin, but instead, once I have named it for what it is, I move into thanksgiving to the One who has forgiven and cleansed me. At this point, I am ready to present my requests and intercede for others.

The Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian followers of Jesus, and I pray these words for us as we seek to draw closer to God:

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(Ephesians 3:14-19).

Remember, the purpose of prayer is not just to get answers. The purpose is to develop an intimate, personal relationship with the One who loves you, gave Himself for you and longs for you to live in the light of His presence. Achieving the purpose makes the struggle more than worthwhile.

Abba, Father, thank You for the privilege of coming into Your presence. Thank You for helping me overcome my struggle with concentration, consistency and content as I choose to persevere in prayer. I love You! The reward of drawing nearer to Your heart makes the work of prayer worthwhile a hundred times over. Please, as I turn to You, even though my prayers may be feeble and halting, turn to me. Help me stay focused on my relationship with You. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

TRUTH FOR TODAY: Romans 8:26, “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.” (NIV)

Philippians 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (NIV)