

7 Tips for When it's Your Turn to Pray Out Loud

As much as I loved my small group, I always dreaded this last part of our meeting – the closing prayer. It wasn't the prayer I minded. I just didn't want to be called on to say it. I'd stare at my feet, willing someone else to volunteer. I hoped this wouldn't be one of those days the group leader randomly called on someone [me].

Can you relate? Why is it so intimidating to pray out loud?

Someone else always seemed better at praying than me. Their prayers were eloquent and thoughtful. They knew the right "church" words to say that sounded like the prayers I heard on Sunday mornings. They always seemed to cover the right topics for the moment.

My prayers, on the other hand, sounded so simple and stumbling. I didn't know the "prayer lingo" – all the fancy phrasing that I heard in church. I'd remember something after I left that I should have included. I felt so inferior to the "good pray-ers" that I didn't want to raise my hand.

Why do we think our prayers are any less-than? Doesn't God love to hear from each of his children?

Don't you wish you could feel more confident praying out loud? Want to learn to pray like the "pros"?

Prayer isn't only meant for us to do alone and in private. It's not merely a silent activity. We're meant to pray *together* (as a group) and to pray *with* and *for* one another (in small groups). So, [why are we so afraid to pray in public?](#)

How to Pray Out Loud – 7 Tips for When it's Your Turn to Pray

1. Take a breath and invite the Holy Spirit to speak.
2. It's OK to keep it short.
3. Focus on one area of thanksgiving or need.
4. Be open to the Spirit's lead for other prayer topics.
5. Be you. Pray in your own voice.
6. Remember that God wants to hear YOUR voice as much as anyone else's.
7. Keep praying

Next time you have the opportunity to pray with someone or to lead a small group in prayer, use these 7 confidence-building tips for praying out loud.

1) Take a breath and invite the Holy Spirit to speak.

I still get uncomfortable and nervous praying in front of others. There's always someone else in the room more experienced, more eloquent, more spiritual than I am. Thoughts of inadequacy flash through my head. So, I pause and take a deliberate breath in. As I breathe in, I silently pray "Come, Holy Spirit" and invite the Spirit to lead my words.

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This helps to focus my mind and ready it for prayer. It invites the Spirit to guide my words. It relaxes my shoulders and helps me enter a time to focus on God, not me.

2) It's OK to keep it short.

Long prayers aren't any better than short prayers. In fact, Jesus warns against praying long, wordy prayers just for the show of it. Especially as you're getting started, pray short, concise prayers. Don't worry about covering every single prayer need of the world. Instead, keep your words short, sweet and to the point.

3) Focus on one area of thanksgiving or need.

To help find the right words and keep your prayer short, focus on one key area of thanksgiving or need. Consider the situation and why you are praying.

Are you closing out your Bible study group? *Give thanks for the time together and for God speaking into your hearts through his Word.*

Are you opening a meeting? *Ask God to be present in your meeting, filling the room with his wisdom and guidance for the work ahead.*

Are you praying over needs shared in a small group? *Call upon God's healing power to provide healing/comfort/guidance for the needs shared in the group.*

4) Be open to the Spirit's lead for other prayer topics.

Don't overly-script your prayers. Be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance as you pray. Allow your prayers to shift to other topics if you feel led. Allow the Spirit to direct whether you pray generalized or summary versions of the group's needs or if you call out needs by name and specifics. Keep your prayers rooted in compassion and discretion, though, never revealing something shared in confidence.

5) Be you. Pray in your own voice.

Prayers don't have to be fancy or poetic. Don't worry about praying like someone else or sounding like the prayers you hear during church service. Be you. Pray in your own voice, in your own words, in your own way.

6) Remember that God wants to hear YOUR voice as much as anyone else's.

God created you as a special, wonderful, unique individual. He wants to hear YOUR voice in prayer. He's after your heart and wants to meet you in prayer – both when you pray alone and when you pray with others.

7) Keep praying

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The best way to become more comfortable praying out loud is to keep praying out loud. Don't shy away from opportunities. Instead, when you're in groups where you feel comfortable (a small group, a Bible study, with friends), take a turn saying the prayer. Raise your hand to volunteer. If you're too hesitant to raise your hand, then privately let the leader know you want to work on praying out loud and allow them to call on you to lead the prayer.

SUMMARY: – 7 Tips for When it's Your Turn to Pray

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Bonus tip: Want to improve your prayer language? Start [praying through scripture](#). The poetic, flowing words you often hear in prayers are straight from the Bible, often from the Psalms. These are God's words and praying through his Word is powerful.

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