

Spending an
hour in Prayer

Written by Sally Lees

If praying for an hour seems intimidating, it's probably because we're still learning to share ourselves with God as we would with a friend. The following suggestions are designed to help you 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.

Some things you may find helpful: your Bible, a hymn/song book, a notebook, worship CD, a world map or globe, perhaps a church directory and your own or your church's current prayer list and a notebook. Then find a place where the two of you won't be disturbed.

Preparation

1 min. Starting off. Ask God to help you spend this time profitably with Him, to fill you with His Spirit and guide you as you pray. Give yourself to Him for this hour.

Praise, Worship & Thanksgiving

10 Min. Worship. You could:

Listen to a worship CD

Read one of the Psalms or use the words of a hymn

Sing to the Lord - try lifting up your voice in praise. Psalm 98:4

says make a 'joyful' (and not necessarily tuneful) noise to the Lord! He loves to hear your voice

Thank Him for His goodness to you, your family and friends. 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'll sense His presence more deeply.

3 Min. Confession. As we come closer to God we become more aware of His holiness and are humbled in His presence. Spend a few minutes going over with Him recent sins which weigh on you. But don't dredge up old ones! Read 1 John 1:9. Ask His cleansing, then accept it by faith and thank Him for it. He is far more willing to forgive than you are to ask.

5 Min. Listen to God – wait on Him

Give God chance to speak to you, prayer is 2 way communication and we can often be on permanent 'send', not listening for His 'still small voice' that waits to see if we will be silent. If you are distracted by things you need to do later, shopping lists etc. don't worry, just give them to Him and fix your eyes on Him again. It will get easier the more you do it! If you sense the Holy Spirit bring a scripture, person or thought to mind, jot it down, look up the scripture and pray into it. Keeping a record of what God says to you can be helpful and encouraging when you look back over time. The length of time you spend waiting on Him will probably increase the more hours you spend with Him, but 5 minutes can seem like a *long* time initially!

Petition

5 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.

10 Min. Pray For Friends, Relatives, Neighbours, Workmates.

Don't just read a list of names to God, talk to Him about their lives and needs. Pray God will bless them and draw them all closer to Jesus. If they are not Christians yet 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.

10 Min. Pray For Your Church.

To be a light shining in the darkness that exalts the name of Jesus. For increased hunger and love for God and His vision for the future. For opportunities and favour in your local community. Pray for your church leadership, the children and youth, families, singles, widowed, the sick and elderly.

10 Min. Pray For Nottingham / Nottinghamshire

For God's order in our city and county in areas such as Education, the Church, Government & Politics, Health & Social Services, Business & Commerce, Law & Order and in the Media. For the homeless and vulnerable, students etc...

5 Min. Pray For Our Nation and Other Nations

For God's blessing on our nation and its leaders. For righteousness in government and policies sensitive to the needs of the oppressed here and overseas. For the work of Christ throughout the world. Intercede for unreached people groups, call on God to send labourers 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. Pray that the Kingdom of heaven will be established on the earth.

Finishing - Thanksgiving

1 Min. Thank God for meeting with you, listening to you and speaking to you and place all the people, concerns and situations you have prayed about into His very capable hands

A Few Suggestions

Here are some ideas that may help you pray more freely. First, be yourself, talk to God like you'd talk to your best friend.

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 Jesus.

Try praying out loud, being able to hear yourself pray really helps. You'll find that your mind doesn't wander as easily.

Don't feel you have to do all the talking. Discuss something with the Lord, then be silent for a while. 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 an hour in prayer. You'll find God will guide you in your prayer time.

Reprinted by kind permission of Sally Lees