



30 Days of Prayer Challenge

I'm so glad you've decided to join me for thirty days of prayer. If you and/or your group choose to participate in this challenge, you will commit to spend ten extra minutes in prayer each day using one of two resources: (1) this free downloadable introduction to different prayer methods or approaches, which you may use throughout the thirty days, or (2) the book *30 Days of Prayer for Spiritual Stamina* (to order the book, see www.AbingdonWomen.com/Elijah). The idea is to focus on prayer for thirty days using a variety of methods. My hope is that this commitment will provide a place to start and a track to run on for those of us who long to grow in prayer.

Introductions to Prayer Methods

I'm providing a framework for five days of prayer that you will repeat for six sets until you have prayed daily for thirty days. So over a five-day span, you will engage in praying silently, praying aloud, praying through writing, praying with movement, and praying together. Then you will start the process again, going through the five exercises in order so that you are changing your prayer method each day.

1. Praying Silently (Days 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26)

Take a few moments to prepare. Turn off all electronics and try your best to minimize anything that might interrupt you for the next few minutes. For silent prayer, I must put my phone and laptop in another room because inevitably I will think of someone I need to text or something I need to look up online as soon as I slow down. Once all distractions are put away, spend about five to ten minutes talking to the Lord.

- Praise Him.
- Confess your sins.
- Thank Him for all He has done.
- Bring your requests before Him.

Then spend at least five minutes in complete silence. For me this takes discipline to slow down and be completely still. If you have a commitment or looming to-do list, you may find it helpful to set a timer. When worries, plans, or thoughts about the day invade your mind, redirect yourself to thinking about God and listening quietly.

2. Praying Aloud (Days 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27)

I find it helpful to speak prayers aloud because I am less likely to stop talking mid-thought. I'll admit that sometimes in the midst of silent prayers, my mind can wander off. Talking out loud helps us make a connection with God that is relational. It's the way we talk to family and friends, and it can be a great way to vary our method of praying to God.

30 Days of Prayer Challenge ~ Page 2

Choose a passage of Scripture to read aloud as part of your prayer time today. Then continue speaking aloud as you praise, confess, and thank God as well as ask Him for everything you need.

Now sit quietly and listen for the Holy Spirit to affirm, guide, and inspire you according to His Word.

3. Praying Through Writing (Days 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28)

If you are not a fan of writing things down, I want to invite you to stretch yourself. Some of my friends have shared that they don't want to write their prayers because they would be mortified if anyone ever read them. I understand these concerns. You can hide your journal so it cannot be found, or you can tear out your written prayers and shred or burn them when you are finished. Another idea is to type them on your computer and then immediately delete them. One of the benefits of writing prayers is that it slows us down, giving us time to meditate and reflect—because our minds move faster than our fingers. So grab a journal, notebook, piece of paper, or laptop, and get ready to talk to God, believing that the earnest prayer of a righteous person is powerful and brings great results!

Begin with praise. Take a moment to write a paragraph (at least four sentences) praising God for who He is. Feel free to focus on God's names or character qualities.

Now write a prayer confessing the areas where you are struggling. Sometimes when I am writing out sensitive information, I use first letters of words rather than complete sentences.

Next take some time to reflect and slowly write down what you are thankful for in your life. You can make a bulleted list if you prefer. While you may have many material blessings such as a house, car, and job, consider also people, circumstances, and even difficulties that are developing your character. Identify at least ten things you are grateful for today.

Write out a list of your requests and the needs of others around you.

Don't put your pen down yet. Turn to a blank page in your journal. Sit quietly and focus on God. As you listen, record any encouragements, nudges, convictions, ideas, or Scriptures that come to mind.

4. Praying with Movement (Days 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29)

When our children were small, my husband and I taught them to fold their hands in prayer. This wasn't some sort of formula but a way to help them focus and recognize the significance of talking to God. With folded hands, they couldn't bother their siblings or fidget quite as much.

We can talk to God in any position. Many times I silently cry out to God in the midst of other activities—such as during a conversation, while trying to complete a challenging task, or even when speaking on a stage. But as we see in Scripture, people often intentionally change their physical posture for a time of prayer.

30 Days of Prayer Challenge ~ Page 3

In ancient times when people would come before a king, they would kneel to show their humility. Likewise, throughout the Bible we see people kneeling in prayer to show humility before God. Kneeling in prayer was something Jesus did as well (Luke 22:41). In other places in Scripture we find people shouting, dancing, clapping, lifting their hands, bowing down, or lying prostrate as they speak to God. Even today changing our physical posture can help us focus and give an outward expression to our inward attitudes of worship and humility before our Creator.

If you have physical limitations, modify your postures as you pray. Sometimes I skip over instructions such as these for the sake of time or comfort, but I invite you to fully engage in lifting hands, kneeling, and even lying in a prostrate position as you talk to God either silently or aloud.

Some other ideas for your varied postures of prayer include praying while coloring, while doing a simple craft, or while holding a special necklace or object that helps you focus in prayer.

Now choose your posture for listening today. You can take any position that helps you focus on the Lord as you spend some time meditating on what God is speaking to you today.

5. Praying Together (Days 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30)

Prayer can be a very personal and private activity. Yet as we find in Scripture, prayer is a spiritual rhythm that is not only private but also shared among believers. Jesus taught that asking in agreement with other believers is powerful: "I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:19-20). We also know that members of the early church were devoted to teaching, fellowship, and prayer (Acts 2:42).

Praying with another person can bring encouragement to both parties. Although we might be hesitant to ask others to pray with us because prayer can be personal and private, we can press through the initial awkwardness and find power and encouragement by praying together.

Take a few minutes to consider someone you can pray with today. Perhaps it is a friend, neighbor, coworker, child, or spouse. Whenever you are able to get together or talk by phone, ask the person for two or three things you can pray for them personally.

Then share a few specific things that he or she can pray for you. As you begin to pray, be sure to praise and thank God before jumping in with the things you are requesting.

If you don't know of anyone with whom you can initiate a brief time of prayer, spend your time asking God to bring you a prayer partner. Ask for boldness to pray alongside others if you struggle with shyness. God has said that where two or three are gathered together as His followers, His presence is sure to be found.

Take some time now to reflect. How did hearing another person pray for your needs encourage you? Was there a sentence or phrase the other person spoke in prayer that caused you to see some of your needs in a different light? As you process your thoughts, feelings, circumstances, and relationships, set your mind on God's Word and character and listen closely.