

How to Spend 30 Minutes in Prayer

"30 minutes? How could I pray for 30 minutes? I'd run out of things to say!"

Praying for 30 minutes is like sitting down in a coffee shop with a friend. Somehow, as you sip coffee together, you find a lot of things to say. And it's a whole lot more satisfying than a wave and a "Hi-how are you?" But if talking to God for that long seems intimidating, it's probably because we're still learning just to share ourselves with Him as we would with a friend.

The following suggestions are designed to help you spend 30 minutes with the Lord. Within 30 minutes, probably after the first 15 minutes, you won't need this outline. You'll find there's plenty to talk about without prompting.

PREPARATION (1 MINUTE) - Beginning Prayer. Ask God to help you spend this time profitably with Him. Calm your mind and settle your spirit. Give yourself to Him for 30 minutes.

CONFESSION (4 MINUTES) - Spend a couple of minutes going over with Him recent sins which weigh on you. But don't dredge up old ones that He has forgiven. 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.

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING (4 MINUTES) - Adoration. Sing to the Lord using a hymnal or some choruses you know. Come on, lift your voice in praise; there are just the two of you. Now start to thank Him for His goodness to you and your 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.

PETITION (4 MINUTES) - 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 onto praying for the needs of others.

INTERCESSION (5 MINUTES) - Pray for Friends, Relatives, Neighbors, Fellow Workers. Don't just read a list of names to God but talk to Him about their lives and needs. 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.

CHURCH (4 MINUTES) - Pray for your church, her needs, and her mission to develop authentic followers of Jesus. Call on Him for a deep renewal of love for God among our people. Pray for your Pastor and church leaders. Intercede for the Sunday school children and the youth, the families, the singles and the widows, the sick and shut-ins. Call on God for the giving level in your church to increase (giving in service, in finances, in worship). Pray for the various ministries of your church (preschool/children, students, Benevolence, missions – surrounding community, your neighborhood, the nations). Then intercede for those you know in special need.

NATIONAL (4 MINUTES) - Pray for Our Nation, that God will guide our president and legislators, our justices and judges, our governors and mayors, our police, and firefighters. Pray for righteousness in government and a public policy sensitive to the needs of the oppressed here and abroad.

INTERNATIONAL (4 MINUTES) - Pray for Other Nations, for the work of Christ throughout the world. Intercede for unreached peoples; call on God to send laborers 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.

Total = 30 MINUTES

Let this time in prayer set a pattern for your life the rest of this year as you root your life in God's Power.

