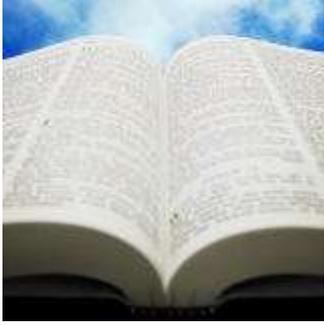


Using the Bible to help us pray



The Bible is a deep mine of expression, reflection and spiritual truth to enrich our communication with the living God.

Sometimes when we pray we quickly run out of words to say. We find it difficult to express how we really feel. Or our thoughts drift to other things. Prayer can be hard work.

Fortunately, the Bible provides a wealth of material to guide our prayers, help us express our feelings and enrich our personal prayer life. Using the Bible can also provide a focus and a framework to help young people and small groups pray more effectively, when their own words are difficult to find.

PRAYING THE PSALMS

The Book of Psalms is really a book of prayers. From praise and giving thanks, to asking forgiveness, overcoming temptation, dealing with discouragement, facing fear, finding guidance, seeking wisdom or gaining courage. No matter how we feel, in the Psalms we find words to express every human condition and they teach about how God wants us to communicate with him. It's reassuring to know that the psalmists had the same feelings we do, and weren't afraid of expressing them to God!

SHARE A PSALM

When words are difficult to find, or the pressures of events distract, share a Psalm, making the words of the psalmist your own prayer or request.

Look for help in the Psalms when you feel:

- Afraid **3, 91**
- Alone **27**
- Envious **73**
- Like giving up **34, 43**
- Sad **13**
- Weak **40, 121, 142**
- Worried **37**
- Tempted **141**
- Unimportant **139**
- Like praising God **96, 100, 145**

Look for help in the Psalms when you need:

- Comfort **23**
- Forgiveness **32, 51, 103**
- Guidance **19, 25**
- Hope **13, 27**
- Peace **3**
- Courage **11, 42**
- Confidence **46**
- Protection **91, 121**
- Rest **23**
- Wisdom **16, 111**

BEYOND PSALMS: USING THE PRAYERS OF OTHERS IN THE BIBLE

Beyond the Psalms the Bible has many other great prayers we can appropriate for our own circumstances. Sometimes these prayers are specific to a particular character in an immediate situation, but other prayers can be used by anyone to express particular feelings.

When you struggle to find your own words, use someone else's words to pray and praise.

- **Psalm 51** (David seeks forgiveness and restoration)
- **Jonah 2** (Jonah's prayer)
- **Matthew 6: 9-13** (The Lord's Prayer)
- **Luke 1: 46-55** (Mary's prayer)
- **Luke 1: 68-79** (Zechariah's prayer)
- **John 17: 9-21** (Jesus prays for the disciples and the church)
- **Ephesians 1: 3-14** (Paul gives thanks for spiritual riches in Christ)

The New Testament also includes some beautiful expressions of praise to God's name and character. They are sometimes known as 'doxologies', songs and affirmations to be included in the churches worship. People knew them well and it was a way of remembering the greatness and character of God. We can also use them in prayer to praise God for who he is and lift our hearts in prayer and worship. For example,

- **Ephesians 1: 19-23**
- **Philippians 2: 9-11**
- **Colossians 1: 13-20**
- **I Timothy 1: 17**
- **I Timothy 6: 15-16**
- **Hebrews 1: 3**
- **Revelation 1: 8, 1: 13-18**

