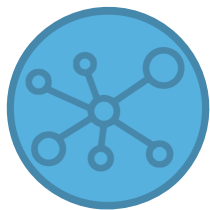


Teach them to pray!



Guide



REPRODUCING

God's life in others

Part of Gold Hill's 'Take a Step' discipleship pathway.

www.goldhill.org/disciple

Prayer is a vital part of the life of a Christian. It can also be a difficult thing to do for all sorts of reasons. If you know someone who is starting out on the life of following Jesus but isn't sure how to pray, this guide should give you some pointers in how you can help them. You could go through it together, or look at it yourself and adapt it as you spend time talking (and praying!) together.

If you want other resources to help, go to www.goldhill.org/disciple. There are different guides for different areas of Christian life, including a guide for four sessions to go through together called 'Step up your prayer life'.

A heart of prayer

The first thing to consider is what prayer is. We can get lost in the bigness of prayer, but Jesus helps us by giving two rules to stop us going off course.

1. Pray to God, not for other people

'when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others.' (Matthew 6:5)

Prayer has an audience of one: God. If you are spending time with God and aren't playing up to impress others, your prayers are on the right track. So find a place and time to be by yourself with God and keep it simple.

2. Pray in your own voice

'And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.' (Matthew 6:7)

You don't need big words or clever sentences to pray. Jesus warns against trying to impress God with our words because it isn't about that. However you normally speak, pray like that too. God prefers it that way!

What to pray

Often we can sit down with the intention of praying but not know where to start. Here are a few pointers to help with that difficulty

Pray about what matters to you

There is no wrong thing to talk about. Nothing is off limits, so instead of worrying what you *should* pray about, just share whatever is on your heart. God loves to hear it! What are you thinking about, worried about, excited for? Tell Him all of it. But structure can help, so here are some ideas...

Thank you, Sorry, Please

Sometimes children learn this as 'teaspoon' prayers (T, S, P), but it is a very simple way to pray. Simply go through each part in turn:

- **Thank you:** what is good that you can thank God for?
- **Sorry:** where do you know you've messed up and you can say sorry?
- **Please:** what do you want God to do or to see changed?

Use the Lord's Prayer

A great way to pray is simply to recite the Lord's Prayer (found in Matthew 6:9-13), but it can also be used as a structure, like this:

- **Our Father in heaven, holy is your name:** start by telling God who He is (e.g. 'Father', 'holy') as an act of worship – what part of who God is do you want to thank Him for today?
- **Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven:** now bring to him situations going on in your life or around you, and ask for God to work in them, ruling over them whatever that looks like.
- **Give us today our daily bread:** ask God for the things you need, telling Him you trust Him for those things.
- **Forgive us our sins:** bring to mind areas you know you've fallen short, confessing them and asking for forgiveness (which He always gives!).
- **As we forgive those who sin against us:** ask for God's help as you do the same for others.
- **Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil:** look forward to the situations you'll face and ask God to give you the strength to face them all in His strength and how He wants you to.

Pray with others

While we should never pray to show off to others, praying with other people can be a really good thing to do! We can learn a lot from hearing how others pray, what sorts of things they pray for, and what it sounds like. We shouldn't try to copy others (remember, use your own voice!), but we can be inspired.

Maybe you could commit to praying together once a week, either meeting up or by doing it over the phone or on Zoom, FaceTime, etc.? Spend a few minutes sharing areas for prayer, and then pray for one another. You could use one of the structures above as a helpful guide for those times, too.

Tools to help

Be careful not to over-complicate things, but there are a few good tools that can help in one way or another.

Journal your prayers

Keep track of things you have prayed about, and revisit that every so often to see how things have changed as you've prayed about them.

The 'PrayerMate' app

An app to build lists of things you want to pray about. When you pray it gives you those things to pray so you don't spend lots of time deciding!

Lectio 365 app

A guided reflection and prayer tool that you can use every day of the year!



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