

Prayer is time spent in conversation with Jesus. It's being in the presence of God and sharing what's on your heart. Prayer can be simple, yet we have a way of over complicating it. We worry about what to say and how to say it. We stress over all the small details, like when and where to pray. Lets face it, we spent a lot of time and energy thinking of all the obstacles to prayer, instead of just doing it. God created us to be in a relationship with Him. His original design was on display in the garden of Eden, when God would meet daily with Adam and Eve to walk with them, be in relationship with them. It was designed to be that simple!

Obviously we are no longer in Eden. So how do we make prayer time relational? Simple answer is to spend time with Jesus. If you listened to Fr. Johns' Tuesday Testimony , he shared some good examples of how he likes to pray. In order to set yourself up for success, find a good time of day and a space in your home that will allow you to focus on Jesus. If you're waking up early in the morning to pray, you may want to not do prayer time in bed where it might be tempting to just fall back asleep. If your prayer time is when other people are around, try and find a quiet spot that will reduce distractions. Once you are in your prayer spot, take a moment and acknowledge that God is present with you. Allow your mind and heart a moment to settle and focus on God and just be in His presence. You can close your eyes or find a religious image to focus on. Open your heart to the Lord, and then begin to share it with him.

Talk to him about your struggles, your desires, your fears. Share with him all areas of your heart. Ask him to help you where you feel you are lacking and trust that in his mercy he will hear and answer your prayers according to his will. Trust that in sharing these things with the Lord, he will guide you. "Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live." Psalm 32:8

After you have shared what on your heart, allow time for you to receive in prayer. If you're asking to help, include quiet time to sit and receive his grace to handle a difficult situation. Silence in prayer can be difficult, but we hear in the bible that "God speaks in a still small voice" 1 King 19:12 It is in those quiet moments in prayer, with our hearts and minds fixed on God, that we can encounter him. It is in those still, small moments that we grow in relationship with God. This requires practice, so be patient and trust that God will show up!

After encountering God in prayer, we respond with gratitude. When we experience God in prayer, thank him. Our response of praise and thanksgiving is a beautiful way to conclude your time in prayer! As we go about our day, we can invite him into all areas of your life, bring him along in all that you do throughout the day. He truly is with us always.

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:161

God Bless, Andrea Schneider