

# Resources for Personal Prayer

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*We develop a personal practice of daily personal prayer*

**Prayer ~ an encounter with God and a relationship with God.**

## Beginning to Pray

First of all, choose a prayer. It must be a prayer that makes sense to you and does not make you uneasy – one you can bring to God wholeheartedly. Prayer must be turned inwards, toward God who is closer to you than you are aware. Choose words of prayer that are completely true to who you are, express you adequately and are worthy of you. Ask yourself how much they touch your heart. And as you offer God this prayer, gradually the awareness of God will grow within you.

Adapted from *Beginning to Pray* by Anthony Bloom

## Prayer Practices to Touch Your Heart – Streams of Wisdom

### Throughout the day – *The Jesus Prayer*

This simple prayer is thought to be as old as the Church:

"Lord Jesus Christ (Word) (Son) of God, have mercy on me (a sinner)."

Say it waiting for the elevator, going to sleep, taking a walk. It will grow in you and pray itself.

### Before you sleep – *The Examen from St. Ignatius*

The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern God's direction for us. See page 4 of this pamphlet for the steps:

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray>

### Twenty minutes – *Meditate*

The various methodologies of meditation can be divided into three main groups:

- **Concentrative methods** rely on the principle of attention. In this type of meditation, the mind is given a simple task to focus its attention on— breathing, reciting a *mantra*.
- In **Awareness methods** one aligns oneself with an inner observer and simply watches the play of energy as thoughts and emotions rise, take form, and dissipate.
- A **surrender method** is even simpler. (Often called "Centering Prayer") One does not even watch or label the thought as it comes up. As soon as it emerges into consciousness, one simply lets it go. The power resides in the gesture of release itself.

From *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening* by Cynthia Bourgeault

### Whenever – *Embrace Silence*

Turn off the noise and distractions. Be present to the present. Let it bring you peace.

## **Authentic spirituality is always about changing you** ~ Richard Rohr **Join a Contemplative Group at St. Columba's**

**The Benedictine Cell** are seekers who want to be intentional about their relationship with God. They use the Rule of St. Benedict as a guide for our ordinary lives and our spiritual disciplines; it challenges us to listen and live in creative tension between stability and change in the presence of God. The Benedictine Cell meets the first and third Wednesday of the month, from 6-7 pm in the Deming Library.

**The Branches Meditation Group** uses the Discernment Listening Guidelines to create a safe space for deep listening and sharing in community. Branches meets for silent prayer on the Fourth Tuesday of the month, 7:30-9 pm in Rm 203.

**Centering Prayer** is a contemporary method of Christian meditation without thoughts, words, images or feelings, designed to open the mind and heart to a deeper relationship with God and an awareness of the divine presence in daily life. Centering Prayer meets Mondays (6:25 pm) and Thursdays (12:55 pm) in Rm 202.

**The First Monday Prayer Group** meets for deep listening for God's voice and guidance in our daily lives. Using the African-Lambeth method of prayer, group members take turns reading passages from different Bible translations, silently praying and then sharing reflections by answering questions about the passage. First Monday Prayer Group meets the first Monday of the month, 9-10 am in Rm 220.

**The Labyrinth Ministry** offers labyrinth walks twice a month, on select weeknights from 7-9 pm and on select Saturdays from 10 am-12 noon. All are welcome, and labyrinth guides are present to answer questions or provide guidance to those new to the practice. Find their schedule at:  
<http://www.columba.org/learn-grow/adult-formation/labyrinth-ministry/>

### **Guides to Help on Your Journey**

**Richard Rohr:** Daily emails of wisdom about the spiritual life from this Franciscan priest. His teaching is grounded in the Franciscan tradition – practices of contemplation and self-emptying, expressing itself in radical compassion. <https://cac.org/richard-rohr/richard-rohr-ofm/>

**Brother, Give Us a Word:** Daily emails from the Anglican monastic order, The Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE). The Brothers offer a daily "word" online and by email to all who seek a deeper knowledge of God. You might use each day's word as a focus for your prayer.  
<https://www.ssje.org/word/>

**Steven Charleston:** Go to the Facebook page of Charleston who identifies himself as "a citizen of the Choctaw nation of Oklahoma" for daily morning meditations. Food for the spirit.  
<https://www.facebook.com/bishopstevencharleston/>

**Insight Timer:** An app with a rich collection of meditations and reflections.

**On Being:** NPR Podcasts hosted by Krista Tippett taking up the big questions of meaning with scientists and theologians, artists and teachers. <https://onbeing.org/>

## Classics to Help You go Deeper

***Beginning to Pray*** by Anthony Bloom is a wonderful book that is simple to read and opens up a world of prayer that is a beautiful encounter with God. He truly knows what it means to pray.

***Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation*** by Martin Laird touches on our longing for radical openness to God in the depths of the heart and guides those who desire to journey yet deeper into the silence of God.

***The Heart of Centering Prayer: Nondual Christianity in Theory and Practice*** by Cynthia Bourgeault is an accessible, practical and wise guide to this form of contemplative prayer; good for both novice and longtime practitioner.

***Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict*** by Esther de Waal is an introduction to the life-giving teachings of Benedict on how to be a Christian in all the mess and muddle of ordinary, busy lives in the world.

***Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers*** by Anne Lamott probably doesn't count as a classic, but her honesty and vulnerability is refreshing; especially good on gratitude.

## Other Thoughts on Prayer

**Praying for others:** We can pray for others or ourselves at any time. To be included in our Sunday prayers of intercession or daily prayer chain, email [pastoralcare@columba.org](mailto:pastoralcare@columba.org) or call the church office.

**Pray with a healing minister at the Eucharist:** The healing rite is offered during Sunday worship at 9 and 11:15 am in the Church Nave.

**Pray with the Book of Common Prayer (BCP):** In addition to prayers for the Daily Office, the BCP offers prayers for every occasion and for every situation. Find some favorites and make them your own. Also, check out the *New Zealand Prayer Book* for fresh possibilities. If you have an adolescent in your life, help them make the BCP their book of prayer.

**Pray the Psalms:** This is a time-honored way of letting the Psalms address us and fill our hearts. ***Praying the Psalms: Engaging Scripture and the Life of the Spirit*** by Walter Brueggemann is a classic. It guides you into a thoughtful and moving encounter with the Psalms.

**Pray with Scripture:** See the "Resource Guide for Engagement with Scripture" for ways to pray with Scripture and pray the daily office.  
[http://www.columba.org/files/Faith\\_Lab\\_Resource\\_guide\\_practice\\_Final.pdf](http://www.columba.org/files/Faith_Lab_Resource_guide_practice_Final.pdf)

**Pray with Children:** Pattie Ames recommends these books

***The Anglican Family Prayer Book*** by Anne Kitch

***Anytime Prayers*** by Madeleine L'Engle

***Bless This Day*** by Anne Kitch

***A Child's Book of Prayer in Art*** by Sister Wendy Beckett

***The Classic Treasury of Children's Prayers*** compiled by Susan Cuthbert & illustrated by Alison Joy

## Praying the Examen

1. Place yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for God's great love for you.
2. Pray for the grace to understand how God is acting in your life.
3. Review your day – recall specific moments and your feelings at the time.
4. Reflect on what you did, said or thought in those instances. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away?
5. Look toward tomorrow – think of how you might collaborate more effectively with God's plan. Be specific, and conclude with the "Our Father."

## A Prayer of Thomas Merton

My Lord God,  
I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
Nor do I really know myself,  
And the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you,  
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.  
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road  
though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore, will I trust you always  
Though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.  
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,  
And you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

*Thoughts in Solitude* by Thomas Merton



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