

How I Pray

I used to worry about how I prayed. But I use prayer in different ways. I pray using music as a background and be silent perhaps using an Icon and lit candle as a focal point. I also use the routine of set liturgy of the Church of England's Morning (MP) or Evening Prayer (EP) (as they say in certain adverts 'other versions of Morning & Evening Prayer available!). There are a couple of ways I use MP as follows:

- 1 Using the book 'Daily Prayer' from the C of E's 'Common Worship. This is not the easiest to follow for a novice due to the various sections.
- 2 Via the internet and the C of E website. This link takes one to the day's prayer with readings, psalms etc., so nothing needs to be looked up:

http://daily.commonworship.com/daily.cgi?today_mp=1

As MP is relatively short I can do it on the train (using the book or internet version) or at work sat at my desk. Not saying the words out loud, but within. If I say it at home, I use a focal point such as an icon and lit candle. I find it important, though, in this situation to have the right atmosphere and not be disturbed.

I have also said MP with a friend via MSN Instant Messaging. Someone takes the lead and cuts the text from MP on the website and pastes it into the messenger box. It takes a little getting used to, but there is the sense of communion knowing someone else is saying MP at the same time. And you can share prayers.

Michael Smith

How I pray

Praying using the 'One Year Bible 2011'

I find praying quite challenging and tend to have casual conversations with God as and when rather than using a set pattern or praying at a specific time.

This year I was prompted to try combining praying and reading my Bible using the 'One Year Bible' which comes from Nicky Gumbel, vicar of Holy Trinity, Brompton. Every morning I receive an email with the theme for the day, three readings, comments and prayers. It is well laid out and I can click on the readings which then open automatically in a web browser for me to read them altogether. I have found having this electronically has worked for me and having the Bible readings included means I have been able to manage it wherever I have email access. It has been good to see how the Old Testament, Psalms and New Testament link together and then provide a focus for praying.

You can sign up at www.htb.org.uk and click on the 'One Year Bible 2011' link if you would like to try this for yourself.

Alix Griffiths

Going to sleep with God

I was challenged a year or two ago to try to put some discipline and structure into my praying. It is (relatively) easy to be disciplined about reading the Bible, because it is such a good book – but praying, particularly in the evangelical, charismatic tradition of St Peter's, is often considered to be best done off the cuff and free-form.

With this background, I was looking for something simple that I didn't find to be a constraint. I decided to begin with Compline or Night Prayer as it is sometimes called. In the monasteries of the Christian faith, this is the last prayer of the day before sleeping. Since I was looking for something quite different from anything I encountered on a Sunday, I opted for the Complines used by the Northumbrian Community. www.northumbriacommunity.org/pray-the-daily-office/complines

There is a different prayer for each day of the week, written by monks and saints of yesteryear. Some of the language is strange to us, but I find that speaking it aloud brings a rhythm that speaks to my soul in a new way. Knowing that these words have been and are used by thousands of people across the world brings a deep sense of the body of Christ into my relationship with God.

As I get ready for bed (nearly every day), I walk through the day remembering where God was and confessing where I was not with Him. Before I go to sleep, I speak out the words of the Compline for the day and I am left with the words of peace "the peace of all peace be mine this night, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

I never thought that I would appreciate such written prayers. I still value the extempore prayers that flow when reflecting on the Bible, when out in the glory of the Father's creation or at times of crisis, but I have learnt that the prayers of wise Christians through the ages add a depth of richness that it would take many years (if ever) for me to reach on my own.

Betty Hayes