

“Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1)

Set the Time

Daily

- Before you get out of bed in the morning (good to pray the Lord’s Prayer; touch and pray for a receptive and blessed mind, eyes, ears, mouth, and heart, to think, hear, speak and feel God’s voice throughout the day.)
- Morning
- Noon – is a church open near you? Is there a quiet room in your home, school or workplace?
- Evening – prayer makes a peaceful transition from day to evening activities.
- Night time – especially good for the Examen (a discerning review of your day), then Pray as You Go podcast to calm your mind and heart for sleep.
- Monastics pray at dawn, day, dusk and night; Merton’s Book of Hours has daily prayers for these times.

Weekly

- Attend a Runnymede Community Church small group
- Attend another church’s services (e.g., Taizé, communion, individual prayers)
- Go for a prayerful walk in High Park or by the lake. Perhaps bring the Bible or a prayer book.

Monthly

- Attend Runnymede Community Church’s prayer walks the first Tuesday of the month
- Attend Runnymede Community Church’s worship night the last Thursday of the month
- Take a longer prayer walk in nature with your Bible, or meet a prayer partner (or your life partner).
- Walk the labyrinth in the trees north of Grenadier restaurant in High Park or at Trinity Square Park behind the Eaton Centre

Yearly

- Take a prayer retreat, e.g., at Sisters of St. John the Divine in Toronto (ssjd.ca/retreats-all.html), or
- Loyola House (ignatiusguelph.ca/loyola-house/) or Crieff Hills (crieffhills.com) in Guelph, or
- Research Anglican Retreat Centres in Toronto and Ontario (www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/human-resources-for-clergy/retreat-centres/)
- Take a special prayer retreat, e.g., at Taizé in France (www.taize.fr/en)
- Spend one or two days of your vacation to immerse yourself in nature, silence, and the Word of God

Set the Place

- Designate a corner or chair in your house for prayer. If it's multipurpose, convert it to a chapel with a candle, cross and music.
- Runnymede Community Church has a prayer room.
- Nature is conducive to prayer, whether in your back yard, local park, the lake, sitting or walking.
- Many churches (especially Catholic) are open days for services or silent prayer.
- Some churches/communities have Taizé services, which use songs and silence to centre the soul.

How to Pray

Once we find the place, and make the time, it isn't always easy to pray. Here are some of the practices which help me.

- The Lord's Prayer (sung) first thing in the morning.
- Meditate on The Lord's Prayer slowly, word by word, phrase by phrase, over days/weeks.
- Reflect on how Jesus prayed (Matthew 6:5-16, Luke 11:1-13, Luke 5:16).
- Morning private communion. Sing a song from a communion playlist, read a Psalm (seeking the grace you are currently working on, like praise or trust, and

writing down relevant verses), reading or reciting 1 Corinthians 11 as you take communion – a piece of bread, a sip of juice or red wine vinegar.

- Listen to Pray as you Go podcast at night before you sleep.
- Pray the Book of Hours by Thomas Merton, with 4 prayers a day for 7 days a week. They are profound and always fresh!
- Thomas Merton was a beloved monk with wide global influence in the 1940's - 1960's. He was a prolific author, poet and peace activist. His prayer advice was this (*Thomas Merton, A Book of Hours, p. 137*):
 - Learn how to meditate on paper. Drawing and writing are forms of meditation.
 - Learn how to contemplate works of art.
 - Learn how to pray in the streets or in the country.
 - Know how to meditate not only when you have a book in your hand but when you are waiting for a bus or riding in the train.
 - Above all, enter in to the liturgy and make the liturgical cycle a part of your life – Let its rhythm work its way into your body and soul.
 - Let there be a place somewhere in which you can breathe naturally, quietly, and not have to take your breath in continuous short gasps. A place where your mind can be idle, and forget its concerns, descend into silence, and worship the Father in secret. There can be no contemplation where there is no secret.
- Lectio Divina (read; meditate; pray; contemplate)
- Imaginative Contemplation (put yourself in a Biblical scene; imagine the sights, smells, sounds, expressions, reactions, tones of voice)
- Ignatian Examen (become aware of God; review the day with gratitude; review your emotions, your consolations (high points) and desolations (low points); reflect; pray for tomorrow). A wonderful book which explains it in great depth and creativity is *Sleeping with Bread* (Linn, Linn & Linn).
- ACTS (adoration; confession; thanksgiving; supplication)

Wonderful Prayer Books

- Thomas Merton, A Book of Hours (daily prayer guide)
- Linn, Linn & Linn, Sleeping with Bread (about Ignatian Examen)
- Linn, Linn & Linn, Don't Forgive Too Soon (how to process, heal & forgive)
- Margaret Silf, Landmarks (and review her other books)
- Orientations, Volume 1 (orientations.iesuits.ca/bob/veltri.htm) – diverse prayer helps and methods; free online or get a paper copy at Loyola House, Guelph

Prayer Apps

There's an app for that! Or at least a website.

- www.pray-as-you-go.org (available as a podcast)
- www.sacredspace.ie
- www.24-7prayer.com
- The Bible App (YouVersion) – many Bible reading plans and Bible versions; you can listen to the Bible on your prayer walks

Physical Prayer

This might be more cathartic than prayer, but there's a powerful mind/soul/body connection. 5 Rhythms is a reflective, improvised dance that lets your body move through different movements, releasing deep-set emotions. The peacebuilders I've shared it with love it. And, there are sessions in Toronto. I'd be happy to take you.

Guided Playlist - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CA_RIOzHISI