

Make Your Prayer Time Count



Many people have the idea that they have to pray for a certain length of time to see real change in their lives. But, that is just a religious mindset, and Your God wants to move you out of mere religion and religious acts and into intimate relationship with Him.

Being stuck in the mindset that prayer has to take a long time can deceive us into thinking we don't have the time to pray. But, when we realize that by just setting a small amount of time aside to be alone with God each day we can see real change in our lives, a powerful prayer life becomes more practical and doable.

There will be days where we spend hours basking in God's presence deep in prayer. But, for some, much of your prayer time will be the time you spend walking with Him in the cool of the day; chatting with Him as you get dressed or on your commute.

In order to develop that type of intimacy with your Heavenly Father, where you recognize His Holy Spirit walking and talking with you, you have to start somewhere. A good place to begin is by keeping a Reflective Prayer Journal. It will help you to *Practice His Presence*.

Writing your prayers out to God is a powerful way to connect with Him. It keeps your mind focused during prayer and helps you organize your thoughts towards God. It also allows you to look back over your journey by reflectively reading the things you've shared with the Lord, and the things He's shared with you. It's kind of like a married couple reading through old love letters. It can deepen your love and passion with the Lord in an unexpected way.

But, if we're honest, sometimes figuring out what to talk to God about can be hard. And, in times of struggle in our lives, it is all too easy to start focusing most of our prayers on the problem instead of on God's promises concerning the situation (the solution). Get in the habit of finding out what God's word says about your situation, and make that the foundation for your prayer.

Remember, prayer is meant to be a two way conversation. So, once you've written out your prayer, pause and take the time to listen for God responding to you. Then write down what you hear. This discipline of *Reflective Journaling* will help you to be more sensitive to the Spirit and voice of God in your daily life.

Getting the Most Out of Your Prayer Journal

Set the atmosphere. Start off your time apart with God with some heartfelt worship. Play your favorite true worship CD, or just sit and verbally tell Him how much you love Him.

Invite Him to join you right where you are – He's excitedly waiting for your invitation!

Date your entries. This will help to keep you on track and help you as you read through it in the future.

Write out your prayers to God and then add in what you feel He is saying back to you.

Pick a certain time of day that works well for you to write in your journal. You might have to try out a few different times until you find one that works best. Then be consistent.

- Mornings before anyone else is awake.
- For 15 minutes of your lunch time at work or school.
- In place of your TV time.
- Before bed, etc.

Don't beat yourself up if you miss one. Just pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you to be more consistent and keep going. His grace is sufficient!