

Tips for Conversational Prayer

Whether you are praying with one other person or with several, it is important to recognize that praying with others is different from praying by ourselves. When we pray together, our prayer is meant to be a dynamic conversation, with one person's prayer leading the next—rather than each one praying a separate, unrelated prayer. The way to accomplish this is to pray with a prayer leader and follow these tips.

Pray for only one request at a time.

When we pray by ourselves, our prayers move from one subject to another in a continuous and free-flowing manner. When praying with others, we need to pray along with that person or group, for a specific request.

Pray “back and forth” or “taking turns.”

Each individual prays for only one request, and then pauses to give other(s) the opportunity to add their prayer for the same person or concern. As they pray, their prayers will come from different perspectives. The Spirit will remind one to pray in one direction, another to pray something else. Hearts will be more closely knit together in agreement for each request as they pray about it.

Please speak up.

This is especially important for women, who may have soft voices. When they pray aloud, their voices usually sound louder to themselves than they actually are to others.

Try not to bow your head.

When we bow our heads, we speak into our laps, which makes it harder for others to hear.

Pray silently along with each other.

Pray silently or softly along with the person praying, in agreement with his or her prayer.

Be comfortable with silence.

Each can pray quietly in the silence, and also be listening for the leading of the Spirit as He brings Scripture to mind to include in our prayers, or other concerns to pray about.

Pray simple, *brief* prayers.

This is more than a matter of courtesy; it is a means of helping the less experienced pray-ers feel comfortable.

It also assures a more dynamic prayer time. The shorter the prayers, the more frequently everyone is able to participate. The prayers really become conversational, with each one inspiring the next, offered from hearts that are bound together in one accord, rather than a series of individual prayers.

Stay focused on prayer.

It is important that those who pray together, whether as a couple or in a small group, agree from the beginning that their purpose for an appointed time is to pray. It is easy to begin personal conversations that leave little or no time for prayer.

Pray requests rather than explaining them.

This takes practice, but leaves much more time to pray! Here's an example of how someone might pray a request: “Lord, I'm bringing my concern for Mary, who has been out of work for more than six months. She's a Christian, but she is very discouraged, especially since her husband Bill is disabled and unable to work. Please help Mary and Bill keep their eyes on You during this difficult time.”

Then your spouse, prayer partner or others in your prayer group would each pray for Mary and Bill *before introducing another prayer concern.*

Follow the prayer leader's instructions.

Even if there are only two of you praying together, it is helpful to take turns leading your prayer times. The leader's part is to introduce topics or “seasons” of prayer. Those praying together need to develop a listening ear to stay focused and praying as one.

Be relaxed and casual so you can enjoy your prayer times together.

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