

ACTS Prayer Model

All throughout the Bible, we're both commanded and invited to pray to God. The Creator of the universe and the God sovereign over all has given us direct access to Himself and He desire for us to come to Him.

Prayer, like Scripture reading and serving, is a discipline. For something to become a discipline, you must first make the conscious decision to do it, regardless of how you feel or how busy you might be. It's a bit foolish to think that we're always going to be in the mood to read Scripture or spend time in prayer but it's important that we do it anyways.

What is the ACTS prayer model?

The ACTS prayer model is a tool to help you in your prayer life. We know that we're supposed to pray and may even have a desire to pray but sometimes we just don't know where to begin.

Where does it come from?

This prayer model helps us pray like Jesus taught the disciples (and teaches us) to. It is closely modeled after the prayer topics taught in the Lord's prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13.

Do I have to use this?

No, God hears all of our prayers, regardless of the structure. The ACTS model is simply a tool to help you.

adoration

God is worthy of all of the praise that we can give Him. His power, grace, mercy, and majesty are so great that adoration can be our only response. Adoration is a way to remind ourselves of the greatness of the God we serve.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Psalm 150:6

What characteristics of God are you drawn to? What about God amazes you? What parts of God surprise you? God is worthy of endless praise, will you give it to Him?

Understanding God's holiness and righteousness points out our flaws and shortcomings as human beings. Confessing our sins makes us realize our need for God and His forgiveness.

confession

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:8-9

Where have you rejected God's will, ignored His commands or fallen short of His perfection this week? Bring these areas to God to ask for His forgiveness and guidance going forward.

Thanksgiving

God desires that we cultivate a posture of gratitude in our day to day lives. One way to do this is to consistently thank God for who He is, what He has done for us, and the ways that He continues to bless us.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

What are 10 things you can thank God for this week? How often do you take time to thank God for what He's done?

God wants us to bring our needs and desires to Him. He is Jehovah Jireh ("the God who Provides"), Jehovah Rapha ("the God who Heals") and Jehovah Nissi ("Our Deliverer"). He can do all of these things for us, but it's important that we come to Him and ask.

supplication

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19

What do you need from God this week? Have you asked Him for it?

What does it look like to practice prayer?

I like to think of prayer, and specifically the topics covered in this prayer model like a muscle: for it to become stronger, I need to work it.

For me, this looks like using a timer to push myself to pray through the 4 topics of the ACTS prayer model. I set a timer for 3 minutes and spend the entirety of those 3 minutes adoring God. Then I move to confession and spend 3 minutes confessing and so on.

At first 3 minutes feels like an eternity and I don't know how to fill it, but I force myself to sit in that posture of adoration, confession, thankfulness, or supplication and ask the Holy Spirit to move.

The more I practice this, the more comfortable I feel with 3 minutes and I'm able to increase my time.

Why should I practice prayer?

As a Christian, we experience an "already but not yet" reality in every part of life. We are "already" saved and justified through Christ, but we are "not yet" experiencing the fullness of sanctification and restoration that God promises.

For me, this applies to my prayer life just like everything else. I know what both God and I desire for my prayer life, yet I don't do it. I run to friends and family for advice before seeking God's wisdom and guidance. I'm quick to celebrate the blessings God gives me without taking the time to thank Him. My desire is that running to God would be instinctual in all circumstances I find myself in.

Taking the time to be intentional about praying can have an incredible effect on our relationship with God and our relationships with other people.