

# PRAYER PRACTICES TO TRY

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Please, God, help my Grandma to get better!

God, are you listening?

God, please help me to get an A on my math test!

**Prayer is our way** of talking with God. But prayer is also about God speaking to us. How does that happen?

Although it's not impossible to hear that big "God voice" that we hear in the movies, it's not the way most people hear God. Often, we hear God through reading the Bible; or through friends, parents, and other people who are close to us; or maybe through a strong feeling about something we've been praying about. Here are some ways of praying you might want to try!



## Be still

Sometimes we don't hear God speaking to us because we don't

take time to listen. We're busy with school, sports, activities, homework, friends, family, church, etc. But try to carve out five minutes from your day to just sit in silence.

Close your eyes, listen to your breathing, and relax your body. Let God know you are there to listen, then quiet your own thoughts. As this practice becomes natural, you can try gradually adding more time. Pay attention to what you notice in this time.

yours doesn't, you can find lots of references on-line by searching something like "Bible verses about \_\_\_\_\_.") Choose more than one of the references on the topic. Pray before you begin your reading, asking for God's guidance. Read the verses slowly. Think about what the words mean to you. Read the same verses again at a later time. Do you hear a message? What words jump out at you? Do the verses give you an idea about how to handle your problem?



## Scripture

We sometimes "hear" God through the words of the Bible. Look up

Bible verses that relate to the topic you're praying about. (Some Bibles have an index for this. If



## Breath Prayers

Breath prayers are short prayers that help us to focus through breathing.

Get into a comfortable position and, if it helps, close your eyes. Choose a word or a short sentence to repeat as you breathe. An example might be, "God is good." As you breathe in you would say,

“God” and as you breathe out you would say, “is good.”

Repeat your prayer as you focus on the words and your breathing. If your attention starts to wander, calmly bring it back to focus on the words. You can start with a couple of minutes and add more time. You can make up breath prayers for different situations and say them anytime and anywhere.



## *Music and Nature*

Music and nature are two great ways to help us focus on listening to God. Find some Christian music that you enjoy, put on your ear buds, and listen. Make a picture in your mind of what is happening in the songs.

You can do the same in nature. Find a quiet spot outside or by a window. Focus on the sights and sounds of nature and the marvel of the One who created it all. Listen for God’s voice and spend time feeling close to our Creator.



## *Move*

If sitting under a tree’s not your style because you like to be on the move, that’s great! Many people pray as they run, walk, dance, or do other activities. Concentrate on what you want to say to God, and allow time to listen while moving, too.



## *Journaling*

A prayer journal is great for creating your list each day of who needs your prayers or simply writing what you want to say to God. It’s also a way to record what you heard in response to your prayer and a great history of your prayer life. Take time weekly or monthly review old prayers, and you may be amazed to see how they were answered.



## *Expand Your Prayer*

When we pray, we often focus on what we want from God. And there’s nothing wrong with praying for our own needs. God always cares about the things we need and want in our lives! But remember when you pray to thank God—for your blessings, for answers to your prayers, and for Creation. Ask for forgiveness for when you’ve done something wrong. And pray for the needs of others—both the people you know and love and people in need everywhere.



## *And finally...*

...remember there’s no one correct way to communicate with God. The important thing is that you just keep praying, in whatever ways draw you closer to God. ■