

## What next?

Build up a collection of favourite prayers and sayings - anything that speaks to you. You can find them in greeting cards, cuttings in the press or bookmarks and prayer cards. You could make a scrapbook for them.

Use the Bible - God's word to his people down the centuries. When reading a passage ask the question "How might God be speaking to me in my own in situation in today's world? Is there a word or a sentence that prompts an idea or something to pray about?"

While you are in church, why not help yourself to some of the 'prayers for various occasions' (on the altar at the front of the south aisle).

Browse the St Mary's library (behind the font). You can borrow books – including books on prayer, the bible, and Christianity – from here.

Browse your local Christian bookshop; most cathedral shops sell useful resources.



You might like to keep a note of particular things you have prayed about and the situations and people that concern you - this this might be people close to you, or things you have seen on the news – this helps with your regular prayers and when you look back you will be amazed how God answers them.

If you would like more support about prayer, or about any aspect of your journey of faith, you might like to contact the vicar (see over for contact details) or, if you are not from Buckden, you might prefer to speak to your local minister.

## ..... Church

Here's where you put the details of what's on offer prayer-wise at your own church...

## How to contact us

Here's where you put your church's contact details – address, telephone, website, and social media etc

## What is Prayer?



Prayer is a conversation with God.

Sometimes it is good to talk to God using a traditional prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer (see next page), but sometimes it is good to pray just in your own words. Sometimes you may not be able to find any words – but you can still bring to God all that's on your mind and heart.

God will always hear us, even if we have never spoken to him before, but it is good to get into the habit of praying regularly – not just in a crisis.

Conversation is a two way process and we can spend time quietly in God's presence, listening and waiting for new ideas to come into our mind about our daily journey - people to help, relationships to mend, wrongs to put right .

Just as conversation with another person helps us get to know them, so conversation with God helps us grow closer to God.

# The Lord's Prayer

Jesus' disciples saw that he took time apart to pray and had a wonderfully close relationship with God – he even called God his 'father' (the word used in the bible translates as 'dad'!) So they asked him to teach them how to pray, so that they could enjoy the same closeness with God. Jesus taught them what we now know as 'The Lord's Prayer'. It is both a prayer in itself (the words in bold), and a template for praying more informally (suggestions are given in italics).

## **Our Father, who art in heaven,**

*God is close to us, and he loves us like the very best kind of parent*

## **Hallowed be thy name,**

*Yet God is still holy – the creator of the world – it is right that we should respect and praise him*

## **Thy kingdom come, thy will be done**

## **On earth as it is in heaven.**

*We pray that the world may become closer to the place God created it to be – the way that we live our lives is part of this*

## **Give us this day our daily bread,**

*We can ask God for things we need and how we might provide 'daily bread' for others.*

## **And forgive us our trespasses,**

## **As we forgive those who trespass against us.**

*Being in right relationship with God means that we also need to live peacefully with each other, but we often need God's help with this*

## **And lead us not into temptation,**

## **But deliver us from evil.**

*We can ask God to help us stay strong when we are facing challenges in life, or are tempted to make wrong choices.*

# Learning to Pray



## **How to start?**

Use your **hand**. Your fingers can be used to bring to mind different things to pray for.

## **palm**

This is where our fingers join together. It is exposed when we open our hand to receive and resounds when we clap hands in praise. Give thanks for specific blessings you have received and be ready for God to fulfill your needs or to prompt you with things to do in his service.

## **thumb**

this is the strongest digit on your hand. Give thanks for all the strong things in your life, like home and family, relationships that support and sustain you.

## **index finger**

This is the pointing finger. Pray for all those people and things in your life who guide and help you. Friends, teachers, doctors, nurses, emergency services and so on.

## **middle finger**

This is the tallest finger. Pray for all the people who have power in the world, like world leaders and their governments, MPs and local councillors, the Royal Family.

## **ring finger**

This is the weakest finger on your hand. It can not do much by itself. Remember the poor, the weak, the helpless, the hungry, the sick, the ill and the bereaved.

## **little finger**

This is the smallest and the last finger on your hand. Pray for yourself.

# Making prayer part of your life

## **When should I pray?**

Traditionally, prayer times have been morning and evening, but you can choose a time which is best for you. It helps to be somewhere quiet, where you can have some time for yourself.

## **Do I have to kneel and close my eyes?**

Kneeling is the traditional posture for saying sorry, and standing up is traditional for praising God, but you can pray anywhere - walking, standing, sitting, whatever feels comfortable. Closing your eyes might help you to avoid distractions, but sometimes the things that distract you can be drawn into your prayers – for instance, if there is a lot of traffic noise, you might pray for the safety of those traveling. Some people find it helpful to hold their hands open (as if they were about to be handed something) when they pray.

## **What else do I need to know?**



Be creative. To help you focus, use music, a stone, a feather or - with care if you are young or elderly - a candle. Or you could pray with a passage of the Bible open in front of you.

Prayer activity is a discipline - it can be difficult at times, just like keeping fit, being on a diet, or keeping weeds down in the garden! Little and often is best, but don't give up! No prayer, however inadequate you may feel it to be, is ever wasted.