



Praying for God's salvation of people
Praying for God's kingdom to come
Praying for each other and our fellowship

Firstly, thank you for committing to pray for our community for at least one hour this year! What a privilege to personally spend that time with the Creator of the Universe.

The idea of this document is to offer you some guidance and support in the use of your prayer time. For some, this will be a reminder document of things already known; for others, there will be some new ideas to try. I have tried to include a variety of different styles but if you feel anything significant is missing, let me know and I can add it in.

It might also be worth listening to the sermon that launched this initiative from 30th December 2018. It can be found in the Resources section of our church website (www.warwickbaptists.org.uk).

Three Important Points

1. Prayer does not have to be done quietly in a private room. It can also be done whilst:
 - on the move,
 - walking the dog,
 - at the gym,
 - washing up,
 - pushing a push-chair or a wheel-chair...
2. Plan your time well. Be intentional about when you will pray otherwise it will not happen.
3. You can break up your hour in any way you wish, e.g., three sessions of twenty minutes or six ten minute slots across the day. Think what is realistic and works for you.

The Spirit is at work in the whole of life and, as such, God is open to hearing from your 24-7. Whilst some find isolation and stillness helpful (and this should definitely be a part of everyone's prayer diet), it is not the only way. We can connect with God—talking and listening to him—wherever and whenever we are. How great is that?!

Preparation Stage

It is important to move your focus from the world on to God. The following ideas can help you do that:

- Plan in advance when you are going to pray on your chosen days
- Spot routine activities where you can use your time to also speak with God – making a cup of tea, washing up, walking to collect the children, travelling on the bus...
- Gather resources in advance so you use your time to pray and not to research
- Balance the amount of time you talk and listen
- Recognise you can't pray for everything at once, so don't try – choose what seems important that day or divide issues into sections and focus only on one or two.
- Remember prayers don't have to be long. God hears both short one-sentence prayers and intricate ones the same.
- Have some pens, paper (electronic or otherwise) and any other resources you need ready.
- Set your phone to silent (not vibrate) even if you're multitasking and commit not to look at any other apps during your prayer time (especially if you're using it for note-taking/reading the Bible).

Let's Get Started!

Start by inviting God to speak. Ask his Spirit to shape your time together and that you would have ears to hear his voice.

Use some of the following ideas to help draw you into the presence of God:

- Sing along/listen to your favourite worship song (*you can find many on YouTube*)
 - Focus on the lyrics.
 - What strikes you / what's its theme? – allow that to shape your prayers...
- Select a Bible passage, perhaps a Psalm or part of a defined Jesus story (*if you're unsure pick three at random and scan read them – which one jumps out at you?*)
www.biblegateway.com offers an audio version of the Bible for those on the move.
 - Read it through a couple of times.
 - What words or phrases jump out at you? What do the different lines speak about (*often a Psalm develops ideas throughout*) – Injustice? Peace? Fear? Creation? Greatness of God? Let these ideas shape your prayers...
- Single verses: repeat one verse over and over, emphasising different words and praying about the difference they make to the whole.
 - E.g., Psalm 119:105 '**Your word** is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path'
 - Why is his word important?
 - What difference does his word make in the world/for the salvation of people?
 - How does his word shape our views of what Kingdom means?
 - Where is his word not being heard?
 - Where is his Kingdom ignored?
 - Thank him for his Word.

- N.B. Bible verse colouring books (there are many available!) help you with this as you can meditate on a verse whilst colouring it in and emphasising words in your mind.
- Look at a piece of Christian art – perhaps a specific scene from the Bible (*Google images will show a selection of pictures if you search for Bible verses*)
 - What stands out to you? How has the artist interpreted God’s word?
 - Allow yourself to enter the image as you explore it. Let this start to shape your prayers...
- Hold a cross and recall what Jesus has done for you.
- Imagine Jesus standing in front of you or sitting next to you – what might you want to say or do? A physical response might come to mind or words. Let your prayers flow out of this...

Distractions

- It is easy to become distracted as we try to focus on God, whether we’re trying to quieten ourselves or multitasking. Accept this is going to happen but resolve to do one of the following:
 - If a task *needs* doing immediately, resolve it quickly (i.e., take the washing out the machine) and then get back to prayer
 - No rush? Write it down and ‘park it’ until after your time of prayer
 - Engage with it – perhaps you keep feeling prompted to go to the shop when you are sitting quietly. Maybe God is prompting you? Be wise and discerning but open with this, especially if you’ve tried to ‘park it’ and it keeps coming back. Why not follow the impulse and keep praying as you go – ask the Spirit to guide you; be open to talking or sharing Jesus as you go, or being his hands and feet in a situation.
 - Do not panic if you have to abandon your time. Commit to returning to your time of prayer as soon as is reasonable.

In the Midst of Things

Remember this is a conversation between you and God. It is important to leave time to hear him speak as well as to share your concerns and praise.

Some general ideas:

- Write out your prayers and then pray them
- Draw pictures as you talk with God
- Write your own psalm of praise, thanksgiving or lament based on an issue in the news
- Allow your words to form a song
- Prayer-walk the local area (either in person or with a map from the comfort of your home!)
- Be comfortable with silence and listening for God’s voice – does he bring needs to mind you need to pray for or ideas you had not thought of? Does he remind you of a promise in his word? Does he bring a picture or phrase to mind? Be discerning in this.
- Use words of Scripture as part of your prayers
- Mix specific and general prayers

- Pray for all faiths – don't be bias in your prayers
- Be persistent
- Look for answers and keep a record of them

Where can I find ideas?

- Many Christian charities and organisations have prayer letters online or in print (some are on the boards in the church lounge or on the table in the foyer)
- Buy a local newspaper or search online for local issues
- Email a few people in advance. Tell them you would like to pray for them and ask if there is anything specific you can pray about.
- Look at our church's (www.warwickbaptists.org.uk) and Noah's Ark's (<https://noahsark.org.uk>) web sites/Facebook pages for a list of regular events, ministries and people to pray for.
- Pray through the church Information Booklet (address book) – for individuals, marriages, children, extended families
- Visit government websites
- Think about the challenges faced by our local emergency services, schools, businesses, and by the local government. How could they more resemble God's Kingdom? How could you pray God's blessing over them?
- Consider where there is oppression or injustice in our society. Imagine what that might look like in God's kingdom. Pray for God to make that change.
- Who are the lost and least in our area? Pray for those already working with them and also for God to speak about how they could be helped.

I don't live in Warwick. How do I pray?

Whilst the church building is located in Warwick, the church is not. The church only exists because of the people in it. They are scattered across the region and have different concerns and passions. That is why this initiative suggests Warwick and beyond... Whilst we want to collectively focus on areas of church life (community), we also want you to pray God's blessing on your places of work, your areas of influence, your local area and the whole region of Warwickshire/West Midlands. Pray that many are saved; that Kingdom values will prevail in our area; that our community will thrive and grow in it's ability to share God's love and bless others for the glory of Jesus.

Some specific models

Concentric Circles

Start with your closest relationships and work out. Your soul is the most needy – attend to that and it is easier to then attend to the needs of others.

- Start with yourself...
 - Tell God how you're feeling – things you're grateful for; things that have happened; how the day is going...
 - Say sorry for anything that you know you need to
 - Ask God to encourage and strengthen you
 - Offer him your needs and desires
- Move to family and friends

- Move to church life – ministries, leaders, linked missionaries and charities
- Move to community life – work, your local area, clubs you are a member, streets you regularly walk, schools, Councillors, local businesses, major employers, people you sit near on a bus, issues of injustice, questions...

A.C.T.S

Prayer is about a relationship with God. He wants to know what is on our hearts but also wants us to *know him more*. This model helps us do this.

- **Adoration** Our focus is on God – who he is and our worship of him. We remember how awesome and magnificent God is. How amazing his love for us is and what he did to show us that love. In response, we offer prayers of adoration.
- **Confession** As we adore, we become aware of our own faults and frailty. Remembering that, ‘The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love’ (Ps 145:8), we approach his throne of grace by telling him about these things, and asking for his forgiveness and restoration through Jesus.
- **Thanksgiving** This is a natural response to confession and recognising who God is. We remember all he has done for us, for others, and throughout history. How has he answered prayers, both big and small?
- **Supplication** We now request God to hear our prayers about specific individual issues or pray on behalf of others (intercessions).

THE LORD’S PRAYER... (AND OTHER PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE)

Taking prayers we find in the Bible and making them our own is a good thing to do. But we don’t just have to read them word for word, they can guide us into wider thoughts relating to our three topics of salvation, kingdom and fellowship (and more!) Think about the themes they highlight and then let them guide and develop your prayer time as you meditate on it.

E.g., The Lord’s Prayer: ‘Give us this day our daily bread...’

- What are your needs for this day?
- What are the needs of others? Our community? The local community?
- Do you need God to provide in specific ways? Ask...

HEART

This is similar to A.C.T.S but has a slightly different emphasis.

- **Honour God with praise** Who is He? What does He do? How do you see or feel Him?
- **Examine your life** Confess the secrets and burdens you carry. Lay them at the cross and feel the weight lift.
- **Ask for help/needs** Seek help in regard to the confessions you just made or just the daily needs in your life. Nothing is too big or small.
- **Requests for others** Bless others by focusing on their individual needs and the challenges that face our local community.
- **Thank God** Thank him for the things he has done and the things he is going to do.

FIVE FINGER PRAYER



- Start with your thumb (closest digit to you) praying for your *friends and family* – those closest to you!
- Your index finger represents *teachers*, or the outer circle of people you come into contact with. Those you look to or go to on a regular basis.
- The highest finger, your middle finger is for the *leaders*: Government, local, national and world. There is a lot to be in prayer for on this level!
- Your weakest finger is a reminder to pray for those that are *sick, weak, poor and in need*.
- The last and littlest pinky finger is *you*.

Doodle Prayers

- Choose an Old Testament name for God, e.g., Yahweh Yireh, meaning ‘the Lord will provide (*a quick Google search will help you with this*)
- Write this down and match it with the name of someone you want to pray for, or an issue you want to offer to God.
- Draw a shape around both and begin to doodle.
- Pray as you draw. Ask God to direct your prayer time.
- Envisage the character of God shaping the situation – ‘thank you that in ABC’s need, you are the one who will provide.’

Skittles/Smarties/M&M Prayers

This model for prayer will work with any multi-coloured food! Assign the colours to a topic and away you go.

- Put the sweets into a bowl.
- Take one out at a time.

- Before eating, compare the colour to a chart (which you have created/agreed)
- Pray for that topic/issue or in that particular style. A sample list:
 - Red = pray for someone you love
 - Blue = pray for a friend/neighbour to come to know Jesus
 - Green = thank God for a good thing in your life (family, love, health, toys...)
 - Yellow = pray for leaders (teachers, government, church...)
 - Orange = pray for someone who is sick, hurt or needs healing
 - Brown = pray for yourself – say sorry to God for something; pray about something that is worrying you; or something you need help with
- Eat your sweet!

Prayer Meetings & Prayer Link

We have two regular prayer meetings:

- **Every Thursday, 9.45-10.15**, church lounge, intercessions for all manner of issues.
- **Third Thursday of the month, 2-3pm**, church lounge, prayer for friends and family who don't yet know Jesus (*organised by Keeva Austin*).

We also have a confidential **Prayer Link** service, facilitated by Joyce Matthews. This enables prayer requests to be shared relating to people or events linked to our fellowship in some way. These are not edited and are circulated to the group who have committed to pray.

If you'd like to join the Prayer Link, please make this request by sending an email to Joyce via prayer@warwickbaptists.org.uk This is also the address to use for any requests for prayer.

There are a few guidelines associated with this ministry:

- Requests should be clear and only include the essential details to inform prayers;
- Unless an emergency situation arises, permission should be sought before sharing requests. If consent is not given, please limit details and do not include names;
- Confidentiality should be maintained by all involved;
- Please offer updates as situations develop/prayers are answered.

Any questions or feedback

We'd love to hear how God is answering your prayers or challenging you.

Perhaps you've received a picture to share, some words from Scripture or had an idea to encourage us all in our prayer lives?

Maybe you've been struggling to pray or are in need of support?

Perhaps you have various questions about prayer and want to discuss them or learn more?

Please get in touch with Clare Howden claretx@hotmail.com