

THE 5 ANCHOR POINTS IN PRAYER

When entering into a time of prayer it's often helpful to spend a moment quietening down and centring on God. The following points can provide a good framework for your prayer.

1. *Preparation*

You might like to light a candle, hold a holding cross, put on a piece of music, or read a scriptural text, hymn or poem to assist you in prayer.

Choose your place of prayer.

Make yourself comfortable.

Consider what you want to say to the Lord: what do you desire.

How are you feeling: what is your frame of mind?

2. *Entry into prayer*

Become quiet and still - relax.

Try to put aside any distractions.

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer.

If you have one read, your chosen text several times.

3. *Prayer time*

Speak to the Lord in your own words.

4. *Slow exit from prayer*

Perhaps finish with the Lord's Prayer, the Grace, a favourite alternative prayer, a prayer of your own or a moment of silence. Leave your place of prayer thanking God for the time he has spent with you.

5. *Reflection after prayer*

If possible, do this in a different place. Slowly recall the time of prayer: Was it good to be at prayer? Did you learn something; maybe you feel that the Lord was asking something of you? Notice how you feel now. Some people find it helpful to record your thoughts.

PRAYER A TIME FOR REFLECTION

Prayer is a good time to reflect on our life, our actions and our relationship with God.

It's important...

- to see where God is in our life.

- to recognise God's invitation and our response or lack of response.

- to review our life in a way that helps us to grow in self-understanding and free us to follow God's will.

- to help us grow in faith.

Here are a few questions you might pose to yourself in prayer.

For what moment today am I most grateful?

For what moment today am I least grateful?

When did I give and receive the most love today?

When did I give and receive the least love today?

When did I feel most alive today?

When did I most feel life draining out of me?

When today did I have the greatest sense of belonging to myself, others, God and the universe?

When did I have the least sense of belonging?

When was I most proud of myself today?

When was I least proud of myself?

When was I happiest today?

When was I saddest today?

What was today's high point.

What was today's low point?

PRAYER

A conversation between two people;
YOU AND GOD



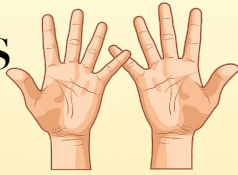
Some people find it hard to pray and find it easier to use established prayers such as the Lord's Prayer or to follow service prayers such as Morning or Evening Prayer. This leaflet suggests a few other ways of praying that some people find useful.

THE BENEFICE OF STOURDENE

**Ettington, Alderminster, Halford,
Pillerton Hersey with Pillerton Priors,
Newbold on Stour with Armscote,
Butlers Marston,**

INTERSESSIONS

USING THE HANDS & FINGERS



1. Our THUMB is closest to us.
We pray for those closest to you - your loved ones and friends.
2. Our INDEX finger reminds us of those who teach, instruct or heal.
We pray for teachers, ministers, health professionals.
3. The next finger is the TALLEST which reminds us of our leaders, those who are in-charge.
We pray for leaders in our life, country and the world - that they will lead fairly, promote justice and consider the less fortunate.
4. The RING finger is the weakest finger?
We pray for those who are weak, poor, in trouble, sorrow, need or sick.
5. The little finger is the SMALLEST which reminds us that our prayers should be more about others.
We pray for ourself, for our own needs.
6. When we look at our PALM we see all the fingers attached to it and we *give thanks for all the blessings we have been given by God.*
7. When we look at the other hand we think of the things we've done wrong or not done that we should have.
We say sorry and ask God to forgive us.
We then ask God to help us to forgive those who have done wrong to us and those we love.
8. We finish by clasping our hands together. This reminds us that we hug those we love and that God wants us to love one another.
We pray for love, peace and unity in our families, at school and work, in our community and throughout the world.

THE DAILY EXAMIN

- THE FIVE-STEP DAILY PRAYER THAT ST. IGNATIUS PRACTICED -

1. Become aware of God's presence.

Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you – a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

2. Review the day with gratitude.

Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things – the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

3. Pay attention to your emotions.

One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.

Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow.

Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Our Father.

While the prayer of examen includes reviewing our shortcomings, its emphasis is upon a wider scope of the spiritual movements within the soul.