

Exploring Ways to Pray



Following is the script of the video titled “Exploring Ways to Pray” that is targeted to early to upper elementary school campers. It may be a useful tool for sharing the video as a family. A second part of this experience is a video about how to create and use a prayer labyrinth.

Hello my friends! My name is Pastor Amber and in this video we are going to talk about prayer!

First, I’m going to teach you some Hebrew. It comes from the bible, in Psalm 23, verse 4. You ready?

Ki Atah Imadi. It translates to: “For you, God, are with me.”

What does it mean for God to be with me? Well, it means a lot of things, it means that God is always present with us and doesn’t leave or abandon us. It also means that we can always talk with God—through prayer.

Prayer can be a lot of things—we can talk, doodle, or even act out prayer

Prayer is an essential part of our lives as Christians. Christ’s disciples knew this and asked him for guidance, like you do with your teachers—when you’re curious about something, you ask questions, so you can do it right, so you can know the answers to “why,” and so you can do it on your own in the future. In that way, they asked him how they should pray, John the Baptist—the one who came before Christ and announced his coming—taught his students how to pray. Believers in God have been praying long before Christ came, and Jesus taught us that this is still an important practices and behavior we need to maintain. And each of the gospels—the books of the bible that contain the Jesus narratives/stories (teachings and life)—there are 4, have a different version of this prayer...but you probably know it best from one adapted from the Gospel of Matthew:

Our Father [who art] in heaven, hallowed be Your [thy] name. Your [Thy] kingdom come, Your [thy] will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but



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deliver us from evil. For Yours [thine] is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

We can pray in a bunch of different ways, and Jesus gave us a lot of examples, this Lord's Prayer being the most well known and used in our worship.

You don't have to use fancy words or run away to a secret place to be with God and pray—do you remember the Hebrew we just learned? *Ki atah imadi*. God is always with us, and God knows us and wants us, just as we are.

You may have heard, or know, or read that God knows the inner most thoughts and desires of our hearts...so why then, do we need to pray and share with God if God already knows?

Our God is kind. God doesn't force us to love or worship God...instead, God invites us and offers us to talk and love and learn with God. God may know what's in your heart, but wants you to share...to want to love God. Because forced love isn't love at all.

Have you heard your parents ever say, "Well, I'm not a mind reader, dear, I need you to tell me what it is you want. Use your words." My mom did, a lot—because I expected her to just know what I was feeling or thinking and respond/fix it.

As Christians, we are "Christ-followers," believers in God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And this journey is a path bound in a covenant. (younger campers) Do you know that word? It's a promise that God makes with us and that we make with God. And it means that God doesn't force us to do ...well, anything. Instead, God just (continually) invites us to be in relationship with God—that's what a covenant is—an invitation to keep and hold a promise. That's why the scripture from Luke that we just read talks about asking. It's not because God is like a vending machine where we put prayers and words and feelings in to and expect a reward or treat, but a reminder of the promise that God is with us and we also need to invite God into the places and spaces where we are—our needs, hopes, desires, and feelings.



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Did you know that we can be mad at God in prayer? We can laugh with God in prayer, and we can pray for other people and our friends and family too! There are so many ways we can pray!

How can prayer be different from talking to yourself?

Well, one way is that we expect God to be listening, and even respond to us. Sometimes we can keep a prayer journal, or little notes tucked away with written prayers; other times, we can hold our prayers close in our hearts—whether they are happy prayers, hopeful prayers, or prayers that come from hurt and we want to feel better, or for a loved one or friend to feel better.

Prayer can be laughter when a friend shares a good story with us, or it can be in tears we cry when we or a friend is hurting. Prayer can be moments of silence and stillness where the only sound we hear are the birds chirping in the trees outside. Prayer can be asking for a blessing over our food, or over our work. Prayer can be reading the bible and asking God questions.

Remember the Hebrew we learned earlier? Ki atah Imadi—God is always with us. And we can pray to God anywhere, at any time. It doesn't require anything of us. We don't have to get ready for it. If God is always with us, God knows why we are praying and Jesus, God's Son, prays with us. Isn't that cool? I think it's cool.

Some times my head wants to explode when I think about being able to talk with the God who created EVERYTHING, me, you, the squirrels in the trees, the trees themselves! This same God wants to know about me, know what I'm feeling, know what I need—and not like the latest toys, or how much I want to play the new animal crossing game on switch...but what we actually need: hope when things get scary, love when I feel alone, friends when I need help doing something, understanding when I'm confused, words when I don't have any. Those are the needs God wants us to share.

God isn't a vending machine, where we put in a prayer and get out an immediate answer or reply. Unfortunately, God doesn't always answer our prayers when we think God should...and



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that's where our patience comes in handy—with open eyes and open hearts watching and waiting for the ways God answers our prayers and how God invites us into that answer. Because sometimes, the answer we are wanting or needing, means getting involved and playing a part.

Sometimes, our prayers are answered by action. When we pray for the homeless person on the street corner to have shelter and food, maybe the answer is us donating some money or even a sack lunch to help feed them. When we pray for our friend who is hurting because someone said something mean to them, maybe the answer is that we go and comfort them—When we put prayer into action, we can experience God working and healing and moving in the world through us and with us! Because God is always with us, and will always be with us.

In my next video, we'll look at some craft examples of how to pray, and helpful tools for praying! See you then! Bye my friends. I hope you learned a little about how God is with us and hears our prayers. I hope you learned that you don't have to pray in any specific way, but what's important is responding to God's invitation and talk with God, because doesn't force us to love God, but wants us to share how we are feeling and what we need and what our neighbors and friends need. God wants to be a part of our lives, and prayer is one of the ways that we, as Christian people, involve God as God does really really cool things with and for us! Thanks be to God!

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