

ANCHOR CHURCH SYDNEY

PRAYER GUIDE

Q1 2022



FORMING
HABITS OF
PURPOSE

FORM ING A NEW HABIT

Have you ever set a goal, for example, to complete a triathlon, trained for 3 months, prepared, competed, and ticked the goal of your bucket list? This is nothing like that! The goal of this process is not just to finish the 70 Days of Prayer, tick a box, and move on! It's about becoming someone. It's about becoming someone who both desires and enjoys deep communion with our heavenly father. It's about growing in Christ, as we abide in Him.

This is also not mere behaviour modification, or rule following. Justin Whitmel Earley the author of 'A Common Rule' and 'Habits of the Household' says, "our habits don't change God's love for us, but God's love for us can and should change our habits".

Research suggests it can take anywhere between 18-254 days to form a new habit. On average though, it takes 66 days! That means if we want to be people of deep communion with our 'abba' father, we need to commit to 66 days! Sixty-six days to help a habit become automatic. When we say, automatic, we don't mean mindless, rote, and depersonalised. We mean it's become a reflex for us. We've developed a reflex to pray. Prayer itself is not mindless, but the *impulse* to pray is automatic!

We have developed a lifestyle that helps us do what we value most.

The idea behind this prayer journal is to help you live in line with your desires!

HOW HABITS WORK

James Clear, in his award-winning book Atomic Habits says that all habits follow the same pathway: stimulus à desire à response -à reward! The table below helps us understand how to form a new habit with the 4 laws in mind. A small improvement, over a long period of time, will deliver significant results.

CREATE A GOOD HABIT	4 LAWS	BREAK A BAD HABIT
Make it visible	STIMULUS	Make it invisible
Make it attractive	DESIRE	Make it unattractive
Make it easy	RESPONSE	Make it hard
Make it satisfying	REWARD	Make it unsatisfying

TIPS FOR FORMING A NEW HABIT

1. Start with identity.

Don't focus on achieving goals, but on who you are becoming! Your identity emerges out of your habits. Every action is a vote for who you are becoming.

2. Start Small

To do something big, start small. Start your new habit with a '2-minutes-a-day' commitment and build from there.

3. Implementation intention.

Write an implementation intention. I will [insert behaviour] at [time] in [location]. For example, "I will pray at 7:30am daily on my walk to the station.

4. Habit Stacking

Habit stacking is pairing a new habit with an existing habit. If, for example, you are already in the habit of unstacking the dishwasher each morning, you could connect your desired habit to it. "After [current habit], I will [new habit]."

5. Design your environment

By designing your environment, you are more likely to engage in your habit. Make your habit visible but placing this journal somewhere obvious and noticeable or create a corner of your house that becomes your 'thin space' to encounter God.

6. Remove Friction

Make your habit easier by removing friction and obstacles. For example turn your phone off!

7. What gets rewarded, gets repeated

Obviously, the reward is in the task. Prayer is the reward! But as we attempt to form a new habit, especially when motivation wanes, a reward will help reinforce it. Give yourself a small reward (that aligns with your identity) immediately after completing your habit. For example, after praying, make your morning coffee.


8. Visualise progress

Habit tracking is a powerful reminder of progress.

9. Do it together

Research tells us that if your work colleagues all go to the gym, you are more likely to go yourself! Pay attention to your social environment. Your culture sets the expectation for what is normal. So, surround yourself with people who are living the habits you want to embody. Nothing sustains motivation like belonging to a tribe! A shared identity reinforces your personal identity. We are a community of prayers!

Summary from Atomic Habits by James Clear



“Prayer... is always in danger of degenerating into a glorified gold rush. Almost every book on prayer deals with the “get” element mainly. How to get things we want from God occupies most of the space. Now, we gladly admit that we may ask for and receive specific gifts and benefits in answer to prayer, but we must never forget that the highest kind of prayer is never the making of requests. Prayer at its holiest moment is the entering into God to a place of such blessed union as makes miracles seem tame and remarkable answers to prayer appear something very far short of wonderful by comparison.”

A.W. TOZER

PRAY & FAST ING

Jesus himself fasted and assumed his disciples would fast too. Fasting has been practiced as a spiritual discipline throughout history, as a way to break the power of the flesh and cultivate hunger for God. The benefits of fasting include:

- fasting embodies and sustains our hunger for God. We're saying with our bodies how much we need and want and long for God.
- fasting teaches us that lasting satisfaction is found in God alone, not in immediate gratification in food (or sex, or Instagram, or ...)
- fasting grows us in self-control. As we say "no!" to whatever we're fasting from, we're training our self-control muscle and growing in this fruit of the Spirit.
- fasting helps us put sin to death. We live in an age of excess, luxury, and addiction. Our desires control us and fasting can act as a circuit breaker for us to pull up the weeds in our lives, so to speak.
- fasting grows us in self-awareness. Fasting can expose what controls us. We often cover up what is inside with food and other good things. When we fast from these shallow dependencies, we create room for what is really inside us to surface.





SILENCE & SOLITUDE

“We rush into worship;
out of breath from
daily activities, only to
rush out again never
having received a
blessing”

A.W. Tozer

Blaise Pascal once said, *"all of humanities problems stem from [our] inability to sit quietly in a room alone."* It's probably a bit of an over statement, but in our world of frenzied busyness, silence and solitude may be one of the spiritual practices we need the most.

We're not good at stillness, we tend to fill every small moment of boredom with a quick scroll on our preferred platform of distraction. We numb our uncomfortable feelings with self-medicated social media binges. Being alone, still, and quiet is often a scary prospect.

The practice of silence and stillness before God slows our inner lives down enough to be attentive, present and focused in our prayers.

This practice could be as simple as spending 5 minutes in silence before you start praying or reading your bible.

HOW TO PRAY

“This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.



FORMS OF PRAYER

For many of us, our prayers are narrowly focused on asking God for things, resembling a spiritual shopping list. Of course we ask God for things! But prayer is much more than making requests to God. If prayer is communion, it must reflect a whole range of relational dynamics! Below are the main forms of prayer:

Adoration & Praise

Responding to God's character and worth, worshipping Him, praising in song or word.

Petition

Bringing our needs and requests before our generous and good Father.

Intercession

Asking on behalf of others.

Confession and repentance

Naming our sin, turning away from it and toward God.

Listening and contemplation

Stillness and contemplation, enjoying God, listening to his prompting and conviction.

Thankfulness

Offering gratitude for God's love, blessings, presence and goodness.



A WEEK OF PRAYER

A TEMPLATE FOR WEEKLY PRAYER

MONDAY

A prayer for the working week. Connect your faith & work.

TUESDAY

Praying for your family

WEDNESDAY

Praying for your Gospel Community

THURSDAY

Missional Prayer

FRIDAY

Practicing Silence

SATURDAY

A prayer for rest and sabbath delight

SUNDAY

Preparing your heart for Sunday worship

ADDITIONAL PRAYER RHYTHMS

Daily Office

The daily office (or divine duty or daily work) is an monastic practice of pausing to be *with* God 3-4 times a day morning, noon, evening, night. The aim is about a life of communion with God.

Often no more than 5-10 minutes the daily office looks like this:

1. Silence (begin in a few moments of silence)
2. Reading (A Psalm)
3. Reflect, pray, respond to God
4. Silence (close in a few moments of silence)

You may also like to recite the Lord's Prayer at any of the moments in your day.

P.R.A.Y Method

1. Pause
2. Rejoice
3. Ask
4. Yield

S.O.A.P Meditating & Praying Scripture

SOAP (or REAP) is a method of scripture meditation and prayer than forces us to go deeper than simply reading a passage. We read the bible devotionally, listening for the voice of God, and allowing Him to change and shape us. This method also give words and structure to your prayers.

Scripture: Write down the verse(s) of scripture that stood out to you from your reading.

Observe: What does it mean? What is the author saying? How does this passage fit into the wider story of God?

Apply: What do I need to do about this? How can I live this out?

Pray: Turn your reflections and application to prayer!



A N C H O R
C H U R C H
S Y D N E Y