

Exploring Prayer 1 – Asking God

‘We learn to pray by praying... we start by asking.’

This session offers an introduction to making requests of God, and covers: why we pray at all, how we know what to pray for, and how to make a start.

- What is your experience of prayer?

When everyone has shared, watch [Exploring Prayer part 1: Asking God](#).

Discussion

The following questions may help to guide the discussion:

- How did you feel about what the archbishop shared?
- Was there a moment in the video that challenged you?
- Was there a moment that you particularly relate to?
- Why should we pray?
- How much do you want to be in conversation with God?
- What is difficult about prayer?
- What habits or rhythms of prayer work for you?

Bible

Read Psalm 23

- Look carefully at the shepherd. How exactly does he care for his sheep?
- ‘I fear no evil’ (v4) is a bold statement. What does it mean for you to say that?
- How exactly does the host provide for his guest (v5-6)
- How often does the first person pronoun (I, me, my) occur in this psalm? What impact does that make on you?
- What is the most comforting thing that you have experienced in the life of faith?

Response

Move to a time of prayer. Use pens and paper, and the Bible (eg Psalm 23, Matthew 6:9-15) to put some of the suggestions in the video into practice.

At the end of the time of prayer, reflect on the experience. What was good about the time? What was a challenge? Resolve to spend some time in prayer in the coming week.

Resources for Prayer

There are loads of resources on prayer, including some to help with a pattern of daily prayer:

Stephen Cottrell, *Prayer: where to start, and how to keep going* (CHP)

Pete Greig, *How to Pray* (Hodder & Stoughton)

Pete Greig, *How to hear God*, (Hodder & Stoughton)

John Pritchard, *How to Pray* (SPCK)

Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (Hodder & Stoughton)

- If you want a structured time of prayer provided for you, try the Zoom morning prayer sessions (Monday to Friday).
- Daily Prayer or Time to Pray apps from the Church of England (Morning, Evening and Night Prayer) – www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps
- Lectio 365, which provides focuses on praying the Bible, with written/spoken Morning and Night prayer – www.24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional
- Sacred Space, either online or as an App, an Ignatian guide to daily prayer: www.sacredspace.ie/.
- Northumbria Community daily prayer – www.northumbriacommunity.org/offices
- PrayAsYouGo app is based on Ignatian spirituality, and includes music, Bible reading, suggested lines of engagement, and space for prayer – www.pray-as-you-go.org
- PrayerMate App is a way of ordering your intercessory prayer, enabling you to link to many organisations' and charities' prayer requests – www.prayermate.net/app

If you want to spend 15 minutes engaging with God on your own, try this:

- Identify a regular time and place where you can spend 15 minutes with God. It could be a particular place in your lounge, as you walk the dog, a quiet space in a lunch break, etc. A regular time and space help with forming a habit, a rhythm.
- Start your time with a short prayer asking God to help you meet with him.
- Read or listen to a passage from the Bible.
- Reflect on it, using a few questions: what does this passage help me to understand about God? What encouragement does it offer me? What does it ask me to do? How might I apply that today?
- Pray in the light of your reflections, and then pray for the next 24 hours, for the concerns of the world and for those you know.