

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer – Anglican Diocese of Ottawa

An Introduction to Prayer

“Prayer is our way of communicating with God and being communicated with by God. Prayer is about relationship; it is about us and God in this moment, now.”

Archbishop Linda Nicholls - former Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada

“If you understand personal prayer to be about letting your thoughts be lifted up and away from you so that you are finally silent, you are on the right track. Jesus teaches that God will answer anyone who asks or seeks, but you cannot possibly hear the answer if your own voice is in the way. Best to pray away until there is nothing more for you to say, and then, when you can be silent, to trust that the wisdom of the Spirit is speaking, and let it be. Get up and go your way: you have been heard and answered—live it out and see what happens!”

Archbishop Shane Parker, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

There are as many ways of praying as there are individuals. Our personalities and life experiences influence how we pray, and there are many different types of prayer. Never, ever underestimate the importance of the ministry of prayer.

We can look at prayer as being in two categories: Praying with Others; and Personal Prayer.

Praying With Others

Praying with Others is most often done in liturgical worship services and in other more formal occasions. For these occasions we most often look to published tested and tried formats. For Anglicans in Canada, the two main sources of liturgical prayer are the Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Alternative Services. These can be found and downloaded from the Canadian Anglican Church of Canada website at:

<https://www.anglican.ca/about/liturgicaltexts/>

The Anglican Church of Canada website contains references and links to many resources on prayer at: <https://www.anglican.ca/resource-category/prayer/>

Personal Prayer

In addition to praying together with others in worship services and other corporate events, Christians are encouraged to pray individually. In scripture there are many references to Jesus going off by himself to connect with God in prayer. As followers of Jesus, we are encouraged to follow his example and do the same.

Prayer is first and foremost connecting with God, the Divine Presence. We have all been created as unique individuals, and it follows that each one of us will relate to God in our own unique way. There is no one mandatory way of prayer that must be followed by every Christian. The Anglican Church of Canada website contains references and links to many resources on prayer at: <https://www.anglican.ca/resource-category/prayer/>

What follows are pointers to some of the different ways of prayer that individuals can explore in order to enrich their spiritual life. More detailed descriptions of these types of prayer can be found on the Canadian Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (AFP) website at <https://anglicanprayer.org/>, The Ottawa Diocesan contact for AFP can be contacted at: afp@ottawa.anglican.ca.

Daily Prayer

Christians can intentionally connect with God every day. This can be done in many ways, but experience has shown that making prayer a habit is the best way. The other sections describe several different forms of prayer that can be used to pray on a regular basis. There are many ways to receive daily emails from too many Christian sources to name here. Individuals are encouraged to seek out the online sources that work for them. The Anglican Church of Canada offers several Suggestions for home prayers which can be found at: <https://www.anglican.ca/resources/resources-for-home-prayer/>.

Prayer While Moving

Some people do their best praying while they are moving. Prayer Walking can be a wonderful gift for those who like to get up and move while intentionally communicating with God. Prayer Walking can be done in any location at any time, sometimes alone or with a group. Walking on a pilgrimage to a holy site, such as Santiago de Compostela in Spain, or Canterbury in England, or other special location, is a popular way of praying while moving.

Imaginative Prayer

Prayer using one's imagination is often referred to as Ignatian Prayer, named after St Ignatius of Loyola. He taught a form of reflective meditative prayer that uses the imagination to enter into a story from scripture or other spiritual writing as a way to connect with God.

Praying for Others

Praying for others is often called intercessory prayer. Intercessory prayer invites us into God's care and concern for us, our families and friends, and the world. No concern is too trivial for God to receive with loving attention. Intercession is not a means of manipulating heaven into doing our will, rather it is a way to align ourselves with God's good will for a person or situation.

Pastoral Care and Prayer

Jesus calls all of us to care for and to be "present" to others. Pastoral care is a ministry of presence, based on faith and prayer to provide support and love to those who are in need. Pastoral care is a journey shared in a concerned relationship, and the journey is equally significant in the lives of both travellers and to God.

Variety and Self Examination

We all tend to become comfortable in our routines and practices. However, our relationship with the Holy One can be enhanced and enlivened by variety and trying new things. To that end we are encouraged to look at ways of prayer beyond what we are comfortable with. The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer offers many prayer resources. These can be found in booklet form at:

https://anglicanprayer.org/resources/Self%20Examination%20Beatitudes_2017.pdf; and https://anglicanprayer.org/resources/A%20Prayer%20Inventory_2017.pdf

Healing Prayer

"The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." (Matt. 10:7-8). Healing prayer is perhaps best summarized as Jesus Christ meeting a person at their point of greatest need. Jesus does the healing, not us. Those praying for healing are channels of God's power and love.

Music & Prayer

Music plays a part in most people's lives and can be listened to on various levels of our intellect and emotions. Music can be used in our prayer life in various ways. For some, music can be used as an introduction to their prayer time. For others, music is prayer itself.

Prayer & Art

Throughout history, Christians have used art as a tool of informing and educating people about the Good News of Jesus and the contents of Scripture, particularly when the general population could not read or write. Art has also been used, most notably by the eastern Church, as a means to connect with God in prayer. This is exemplified in the use of Icons in prayer.

Prayer Labyrinths

Unlike a maze, the labyrinth has a single path leading to the center with no loops, cul-de-sacs or forks. They all share the basic features of an entrance or mouth, a single circuitous path and a center or goal. The labyrinth is a universal symbol for the world, with its complications and difficulties, which we experience on our journey through life. In Ottawa Diocese there are several Anglican churches that have included labyrinths outside and/or inside of their buildings, including Ottawa Christ Church Cathedral.

<https://www.ottawacathedral.ca/visit/the-labyrinth> provides more information about this form of prayer.

Anglican Rosary

The Anglican-rosary was created as a tool for prayer. It is a prayer form which is a blending of the Marian (Roman Catholic) Rosary and the Orthodox Jesus Prayer Rope and encourages a wider range of prayers. It is a simple form of prayer available to all, and is a way of allowing God's Word to sink deeply into the soul. More information on this way of prayer can be found in booklet form at: https://anglicanprayer.org/resources/Anglican%20Rosary_2017.pdf

Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross is a devotion used by individuals or groups who wish, through prayer and reflection, to follow Jesus Christ on his way to Calvary. There are some variations in the stations used in various churches and places. Some churches display the stations on the walls of the sanctuary.

Further Resources

People who have questions, comments or requests for resources about prayer, are invited to consult clergy, other parishioners, and/or the Ottawa Diocesan Contact of Anglican Fellowship of Prayer: Paul Dumbrille, who can be contacted at afp@ottawa.anglican.ca.