

Praying as a Family

Many religions, including Christianity, have the ancient custom of fixed hour prayers. Those are prayers that are said at roughly the same time every day.

Christian fixed hour prayers tend to be said in the morning, at noon, at the end of the work day and at the end of the day.

In most religions, including Christianity, the same prayers are said at the same time every day. The repetition creates a rhythm of prayer that runs through the days and weeks and years. It works well for children to say the same prayers every day. They learn them and they become important parts of the structure of their lives.

These prayers have been adapted from The Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church.

As you use them, adapt them to your needs, if you want to add to them or take something out, do that. If you only want to use the morning or close of day prayers that's fine. These prayers have been structured in a variety of different blocks. Use them like building blocks. Put the ones you want in the places that work for you.

Block One – Praise to God.

These come from the Psalms – the songbook of the people of Israel – we usually say these rather than sing them.

Morning

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Amen. *From Psalm 51*

Dinner Time

O gracious Light, pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven, O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed! Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing thy praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Son of God, O Giver of life, and to be glorified through all the worlds.

Bed Time

Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, you that stand by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord; the Lord who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion. *Psalm 134*

Block Two – Reading from the Bible

You can read any of these. If you have a children’s Bible you can read a Bible story in this block. Some families read a chapter of one of the Gospels every day, or any other reading from the Bible that you would like.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3

O God, you will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are fixed on you; for in returning and rest we shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be our strength.

Isaiah 26:3; 30:15

Lord, you are in the midst of us and we are called by your Name: Do not forsake us, O Lord our God.

Jeremiah 14:9, 22

Block Three – Prayers

You can have each person share what they are praying for. Some families keep a prayer list of people they are praying for. If you are using this block at a meal, you can thank God for the food.

You could use the following as a model:

Everyone say something that they know about God – i.e., God is love, God is great etc... Everyone say something that they are sorry for. Everyone say something that they are grateful for. Everyone say something they want to ask God for.

Or you can have a time of silence for everyone to speak to God on their own.

Block Four - The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Block Five - Closing Prayers

You can use one of the following or you can make up your own closing prayer.

Morning Prayer

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Noontime Prayers

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your mercies' sake. Amen.

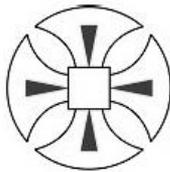
Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you:" Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and for ever. Amen.

Dinnertime Prayer

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen.

Bed Time Prayer

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ, give rest to the dying, soothe the suffering, shield the joyous and all for your love's sake. Amen.



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



saintmarkscolumbus.org