

## Finding Joy in our Prayer – Week 11

How the Prayer Diary, and other publications  
e.g. “Word for Today,” can inspire our Prayer.

Prayer is often considered the cornerstone of many spiritual practices, offering solace, guidance and a deeper connection with God. There are many ways people may pray, they might light a candle, kneel, open their hands, burn incense, pray through music, silence and meditation, or they may simply pray in their car on the way to work. Yet for many, maintaining a consistent prayer life can be challenging. Tools like the prayer diary and inspirational publications can play a pivotal role in inspiring and sustaining one’s prayer life.



Despite the benefits of prayer and spiritual publications, many people can encounter obstacles in their prayer lives. These challenges may include, distractions, in today’s fast paced world it may be just simply finding the time to dedicate a regular moment for prayer and reflection; this one definitely speaks to me, finding a quiet time in my day juggling work and being a full time mum, can be tricky, so it may well be when I’m driving or at the very end of the day. I also find myself just having a conversation with God rather than a structured prayer, so if you ever see me talking to myself, which can happen daily, it’s not me losing the plot (not just yet anyway), I’m just seeking a bit of guidance or offloading some stressful thoughts.

Another challenge for some people is a lack of discipline and maintaining a consistent prayer routine in amongst the many responsibilities and priorities of day-to-day life can feel like a lot. People can become doubtful or disillusioned during times of difficulty, spiritual dryness, or maybe feeling like prayers go unanswered leaving them frustrated, doubting the efficacy of prayer, which I think the latter one I have heard a lot from people over the years, especially when you hear all the horrors on the news, how can prayer be helpful, or how can there be a God when there is so much bad in the world? I admit I have also asked these questions, now I feel that prayer offers a way for me to feel connected to God, that He is with me in the bad times, He is not there to interfere with my choices but rather be with me in times of need.

A prayer diary and other publications like “word for today” can offer daily reflections, personal testimonies, bite size doses of encouragement and can become a guide to the ups and downs of life’s journey. They can be simple tools to introduce prayer in or back into your life, should you struggle with this. The prayer diary for me, offers space for reflection, a space to hear from others and what’s going on for them, and share a prayer. It’s a space for connection not only to God but to the community. Jesus taught ‘when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men ... but when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your father who is unseen’. Prayer needn’t be another pressure in life, it can be a simple conversation or a structured prayer if you want it to be, but there are no judgements from God.



In conclusion, these tools can offer a valuable resource for inspiring and sustaining one’s prayer life, especially in times of adversity. They offer structure, guidance and encouragement. They can help to deepen your spiritual journey and cultivate a vibrant relationship with God. While challenges may arise, the power of prayer and spiritual publications remain important, acting as a guide along the path of your spirituality, giving time for reflection and spiritual growth. However, with all this said Prayer doesn’t need to be structured it just needs to be a conversation between ourselves and God.