



# faith practices:

# PRAY

- Make bedtime a time of personal attention and rich conversation. Read, sing and reflect on the joys and frustrations of the day and pray in a conversational way. Encourage all to let go of their worries and believe that God will hold them.
- Offer “instant prayers” or brief, spontaneous prayers as you and your family encounter joys and challenges through out the day— “Lord, help Marya with her test today. Amen” or “Thanks for the sunset!”
- Use Luther’s *Small Catechism* as a guide for prayer. Review the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer to gain a greater understanding of how Jesus taught us to pray.
- Let the sight of a police car, fire truck or ambulance prompt you to say quick prayers for the people involved.
- Enrich your leave-taking or times to say goodbye with this prayerful exchange

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*“The Lord be with you. And also with you.”*

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- Nurture natural ways to pray. God doesn’t need to hear grand and glorious words. God longs to hear our voice anytime, anywhere and for any reason.

#### RESOURCES

*Prayer: Meeting God in Daily Life.* Lyn Klug.

*Face To Face With God in Your Home: Guiding Children and Youth in Prayer.* Carolyn Luetje and Meg Marcrander.

Both are available from Augsburg Fortress Publishers. 800/328-4648

Your pastor or church leader has access to number of catalogs that provide information on additional resources. You might also browse local Christian bookstores for other resources.



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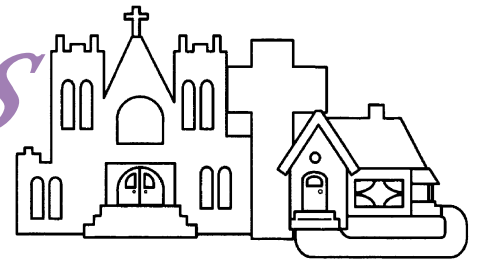
*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” —1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

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- L** As disciples, we are called to do the things that enrich our journey with Jesus. Prayer nurtures our relationship with Jesus and provides support for daily living. Shall we join the first disciples in their earnest plea, “Lord, Teach us to pray?”
- C** Yes! Lord, teach us to pray.
- L** As we gather together for worship, small group study and fellowship, shall we pray?
- C** Yes! Lord, teach us to pray.
- L** As our hearts overflow with thanksgiving for God’s creation, God’s people and God’s life-giving activity around us, shall we shout praises to our God most high?
- C** (Shout!) Yes! Lord, teach us to pray.
- L** In moments of doubt, sadness, challenge or discouragement shall we whisper with the Psalmist, “I look to the mountains, where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth?”
- C** (Whisper) Yes! Lord, teach us to pray.
- L** When caring for the needs of others, shall we call upon the name of the Lord and ask for mercy?
- C** Yes! Lord, teach us to pray.
- L** Leaders in homes and families, will you join in table and bedtime prayers and other spontaneous songs and words of prayer and praise throughout the day?
- C** Yes! Lord, teach us to pray.
- L** Children, will you open your hearts to walking and talking with Jesus?
- C** Yes! Lord, teach us to pray.
- L** Then, join me in prayer, as we honor our call to discipleship.
- C** Thank you Lord for the privilege of talking with you as we walk through our days. Amen

# nurturing lifestyles

that are Christ's style



## PRAY

These pages will help people in whatever family relationships they live to honor their call to discipleship as they nurture prayer in their homes.

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*"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:16.*

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## BRINGING IT HOME

Experts say that a person may speak up to 40,000 words a day. Of course, that number will vary depending on your situation.

***Name some of the people with whom you have frequent conversations. Think of some of your favorite words and phrases.***

Prayer is a special way to share our thoughts with God. Prayers come in all shapes and sizes. They can be formal or spontaneous, original or borrowed. They can be in print or orally passed down from one generation to the next.

## PRAYER=TALKING TO GOD

To pray, just start talking. Or, stop talking and acknowledge God's presence in a moment of silence, like David in Psalm 46:10.

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*"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10*

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Prayer is two-way communication. It involves talking and listening.

***Talk about times you have prayed or observed others while they were praying. Name some prayers that are familiar.***

When we pray, our words may be similar to those we use in conversations with others. They might include:

- Words that speak our praise for God's presence and activity.
- Words that ask for God's understanding and forgiveness for mistakes we've made.
- Words that describe the people and things for which we are thankful.
- Special requests for things we'd like God to provide — nice weather, healing and good health, a good attitude and motivation for accomplishing things, food and justice for all people.

Look through the following ideas you can use to nurture prayer in your family. Choose one, two or more. Feel free to adapt them to your situation.

- Pray a prayer of thanks before meals. Whether "one for all or all for one," memorized or spontaneous, long or short, get the good Lord in on it!
- When praying the table prayer, "Come Lord Jesus be our guest, let this food to us be blest," place an extra chair around your table to actually symbolize Jesus' presence. Or use, "Blest be God who is our bread, may the world be clothed and fed. Amen."
- Decide as a family to set aside a minute or two around noon everyday to pray for each other. Whisper quick prayers of thanks or ask for God's presence and support for the others.
- Use "Oh God, thank you. Amen" as a quick table prayer or spontaneous response to special people and things you see in the world.
- Scan your local newspaper for age-appropriate articles that tell of people or situations you can include in your prayers. Consider the lives of the people involved and the feelings they might have and share a prayer for them.

## NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

- As you begin your day, preview your day's activities and pray for the teachers, coworkers and friends you will encounter.
- In times of conflict, stop and take a moment to ask God to help you "let go" and make a fresh new start.
- Set up a space in your home for prayer and meditation.
- Consider praying this prayer together:

***Dear Jesus, thank you for my (family member) to live with heart to heart; to hug, to smile, to laugh with. We've been together from the start. And for the times when we forget how special we each are, help us to let go and make a fresh new start! Amen.***