

S.T.O.P. A Pattern for Personal Prayer

(Notes for a PowerPoint Presentation)

By Catherine Slight and Lin Pearson

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<https://freeministryresources.org/category/bible-teaching-topics/christian-life/>

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Pray. Without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, this will simply be an ordinary talk. Ask God to help you convey a message from his heart.

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How much ground will you cover in one session? That will depend upon the time you have available, the age and powers of concentration of your group (this material is suitable for all ages—children, teen and adults).

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POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

The PowerPoint presentation which accompanies these notes may be downloaded from our website.

<https://freeministryresources.org/how-should-i-pray/>

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**NOTE: A suitable song for kids to sing would be “Did you ever talk to God above?”
The music and lyrics are here on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/tcqMfVlkQ7g>**

1. ► [TITLE - S.T.O.P. A Pattern for Personal Prayer]

Prayer is simply having a conversation with God.
There is no need for special words. You can't get it wrong!
If you are sincerely opening up to God, he will listen to you.
He loves you and cares about every aspect of your life.

2. ► [Take time to pray]

We all lead very busy lives and God tells us to take time to pray.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” (Colossians 4:2).

“As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Words of King David in Psalm 55:16-17 KJV)

3. ► [People on pavement]

When we cross the road on a busy street, it is easy to be distracted, or feel rushed and want to dodge across to the other side.

4. ► [Don't walk sign]

But we know we ought to wait for sign that it is safe to cross. It is dangerous to risk disobeying the lights.

5. ► [Car dashboard]

On a car journey, we need to obey the traffic lights.

6. ► [Traffic lights at red]

We can't say: “I haven't got time to stop. I'll just drive straight through the red lights!”
That would be dangerous for us and for others.

7. ► [Stop!]

It is the same in our spiritual lives. It is dangerous if we ignore this opportunity to pause in our busy lives.

This is God's plan for all of us...

8. ► [Young child praying]

From the youngest...

9. ► [Old person's clasped hands]

...to the oldest...

10. ► [A Teen praying]

...and all ages in between

11. ► [Puzzled woman - I'm not sure how to pray]

Maybe you wonder how to organise your prayer time. There is no right or wrong way to pray.

But many Christians have found certain things to be very helpful.

12. ► [Find a suitable place]

First, find a place that is suitable.

- Somewhere **quiet**
- With few, or **no distractions** [mobile phone?]
- Somewhere, if possible, where you can be **alone**

13. ► [Set a time]

Next, if possible, set a time.

It is a great help if we can set aside a regular time to pray. Any appointment is easier to keep if it is regular. Setting a similar time each day can help us get into the good habit of talking.

The **start of the day** has the advantage that you can commit to God yourself and your plans for the day. A morning prayer time prepares you for what lies ahead.

The **end of the day** gives you an opportunity to reflect on what has happened that day. You can consider how God has helped you. An evening prayer time also allows you to gather up the frustrations and cares of the day and lay them down, committing them all to God's care. It can be a very calming experience which helps restful sleep.

Many Christians fit both morning and evening prayer times into their lives.

But for some people, exceptional circumstances mean this is difficult. The main thing is to make it a priority to have a time of prayer each day.

14. ► [Notebook and pen]

The notebook is a useful tool for Bible Study, but also for Prayer Times.

15. ► [You can write down]

You can write in it:

- Things to pray about
- The answers God gave to those prayers
- Bible verses that have helped you to have faith as you pray, or give you fresh insight into matters you are praying about.
- Thoughts that might distract you. E.g. Things you need to do later!

Write them down and forget them!!

16. ► [Traffic lights and vertical STOP]

You might ask, "How should I pray?" Here is one guideline which may help you organize your time effectively. It is easy to remember and spells STOP.

17. ► [Sorry]

Start your prayer time by confessing to God any sin you are aware of. 1 John 1:9 says that he will make you clean again, if you really mean it.

That way, you can be like a "clean pipe" through which God's blessing can flow as you pray.

18. ► [Thank you]

God has given us so many good things in our lives.

Every day, even in hard times, God is with us and looking after us. That's something to be thankful for. There are other blessings too:

- Times when someone has helped us
- Things that give us pleasure
- Friends
- Family

... and so much more.

If you have been keeping your note book and jotted down how God has answered some of your prayers, you will have a good start to this "Thank You" time with God.

19. ► [Oh!]

[A note to the presenter: Say the word with wonder and awe!]

This is often a word we say when we are filled with wonder and awe! God is so awesome and great! **The Oh! stands for that overwhelming sense of God's majesty.**

It's a word that is used a lot by the writers in the Bible. Here are two examples.

Deuteronomy 32:3 - "I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God!"

Psalms 7:1 - "O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust"

So the "Oh!" stands for our worship.

Worship is not the same as thanking God for what he has done; rather, it is thanking him for who he is and what that means to us.

- Great creator
- Loving Father
- Caring Friend, etc.

If we don't feel a sense of awe when we speak to God, then we can pray for that!

20. ► [Please]

This is last of all in our prayer times! Only after we have spent some time with the other items should we begin to ask God to answer our requests. We can pray for other people and their needs, then finally for ourselves.

Again, the notebook can help us to keep track of our requests, and of answers to prayer.

We need to be sure that each day we are doing what God wants us to do that day. It is good when our thoughts are focused on his greatness and willingness to help us, rather than mostly on our problems, or selfish wishes.

21. ► [We can pray at ANY TIME and ANYWHERE]

We can pray at ANY TIME and ANYWHERE

We started by talking about a regular appointment with God in a quiet place. But in addition to that, we can pray anywhere and at any time.

We can talk to God about the everyday things of life - worshipping him, being thankful, asking for help. Here are some examples.

22. ► [Children playing with hoops]

When we are playing, in our thoughts we can thank God for fun and friends.

23. ► [Schoolclass]

At school we can ask God to help us understand our lessons and do our best.

24. ► [Engineer working a drill]

People at work can be grateful to God. Right there in the work place, even as they are doing their jobs, they can thank God for their job and ask him to help them do it well.

25. ► [Lady in field with hoe]

Out in the field, this farmer can ask God for help with her crop.

26. ► [We can pray anywhere and anytime - repeated]

You could be:

- walking alone in the countryside
- at your school or work place
- in a crowd on a busy street
- cooking or doing housework

27. ► [Turn your thoughts to God...]

It doesn't matter when or where, you can simply turn your thoughts to God and talk about what is on your heart.

It may be something that's bothering you; it may be something that made you happy. It may be a song or hymn that you sing, which expresses what you feel.

28. ► [Everest climber]

It doesn't matter if you are at the highest point on the Earth...

29. ► [Scuba diver]

...Or deep under the sea.

God is where you are and you can talk to him!

You can talk aloud, but you don't have to. He will hear your faintest whisper, and even your thoughts.

30. ► [Psalm 139:8-10]

Psalm 139:8-10 (NIV) reminds us of this:

*"If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths,
you are there...
...even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast."*

We are never alone and we can put all our trust in God to hear and answer our prayers.

31. ► [Fade to black]