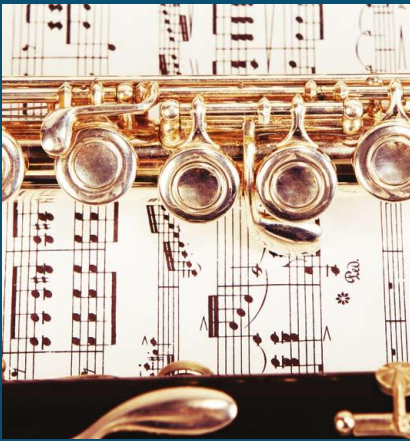




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How to pray



A good site with free downloadable resources on how to pray can be found at <http://www.rejesus.co.uk/spirituality/h2p4/index.html>

Many people feel that they do not know where to start with prayer, yet most people find that prayer is something instinctive, especially at times of crisis or intense emotion. Even people who would say that they do not or cannot actively believe in God have said that they have prayed at such times, even if they did not believe that such prayer had a meaning or would be 'received' beyond themselves.

The sort of questions people ask about prayer today are not new. Jesus himself was asked by people 'how do we pray' and in response he taught them 'the Lord's prayer' (Luke 11). This prayer is therefore deep at the heart of the Christian tradition because it was given by Jesus himself.

(traditional version)

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 that trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.

This prayer has a number of important facets which can help us in the ways we want to pray.

First, Jesus tells us that God is not some remote distant being, but 'our Father'. Prayer acknowledges that we are in a relationship with God who is ready to listen and respond.

The Lord's prayer begins by praising God and asking for God's will to be done in a way that brings our life on earth closer to the life of heaven. This is the big picture that Jesus suggests we imagine first, connecting ourselves with God and with the heavenly life God wants for us. Inside this big picture we can then place ourselves and our needs, - we need what it necessary for our physical bodies to live, our 'daily bread' and we need to know that our spiritual lives are also being attended to. We need forgiveness and acceptance from God and we need to offer that same forgiveness to others who have wronged us. Having said we are sorry and need forgiveness, we can ask for help and protection for our lives.

Praise, asking for forgiveness, thanking God and asking God for what we need are all part of that relationship with God we call prayer. Not all prayer needs words. There are suggestions for prayer and meditation in the Dream section of this website, as well as pauses for prayer and reflection throughout *Sense Making Faith*.