

Conversational Prayer

Church@Home

Conversational prayer is perhaps the best way to teach people to pray—and certainly one of the most enjoyable ways to experience fellowship with God and friends. Christians who are hesitant about praying in a group also find conversational prayer meaningful.

The five Essentials of Conversational Prayer

1. There is no need to take time to discuss prayer requests before the group starts to pray. These naturally arise in prayer. It is OK to take time to clarify these requests and needs in the midst of the conversational prayer.
2. Never pray around the circle. This will make guests and those who have not prayed publicly very uncomfortable. It also means that individuals will prepare their speeches, rather than listen carefully to the prayers and thoughts of others. Foster interaction.
3. Address one topic or theme at a time. This is like in any meaningful conversation with friends. Listen carefully and respond to the prayers of others. Affirm others with “Yes!” and “That’s right!” etc.
4. The leader prays first and models conversational prayer. When a group is learning, it will be best to have a leader. When a need is mentioned, this person can support and affirm. If the group starts praying around the circle, the leader can interrupt the ‘circle’ by praying!
5. Each person can pray briefly and often—or choose to remain silent and just enjoy the conversation with God. It is like a good conversation around a table.

Topics for Conversational Prayer

1. The three most commonly used themes for conversational prayer are—
 - Thanks to God.
 - Praise and worship.
 - The needs of those in the group – and the needs of friends (outside the group).
2. Another series of themes could be—
 - The presence of the Holy Spirit—or the presence of God.
 - The needs of the wider community.
 - Reflection upon scriptures that have particular meaning to the group.

Enjoy Conversational Prayer

1. Singing Songs of Prayer

In the midst of the conversation, it is really meaningful to sing a prayer or worship song that expresses the thoughts and emotions of the moment.

2. Praying with Eyes Open

Because we say so much with the nod of a head, a frown, a smile, a movement of the eyebrow, etc—some groups find it very meaningful to pray with their eyes open.

3. Praying with Closed Eyes

If you pray with your eyes closed it will be important to express yourselves verbally (to take the place of nods, smiles, etc)—so that others can understand your thoughts.

4. Enjoying Silence with God

Agree as a group that it is OK just to be with God. It can be very pleasant just sitting with friends, in God's presence. Be comfortable with silence. Explain this to unchurched friends—and they will be comfortable just being with you and God.

5. Relax. You don't have to speak!

Even some who enjoy praying may find that they wish to just be with God and friends. It is OK to remain silent and listen to the prayers of others.

Teaching a new Christian Conversational Prayer

1. Points to remember—

- Don't make prayer complicated.
- This is talking with God.
- It is OK to talk with each other—while also talking with God.

2. What you could say when leading a person to pray for the first time—

- When with a person who is not used to praying, you could say:

I would like to pray with you. Prayer is talking with God—and He is right here with us. Prayer is like a conversation and so we can share this together. We can just share short sentences or just a word or two. It's very easy. I'll lead.

- Then just start to pray. People will follow your lead. You could say:

Father, we are glad that we can talk with You. Jesus, we are glad you are alive and present by your Holy Spirit. It is really good to be with my friend/s – and we want to spend a few minutes talking with you.

- You can then lead—perhaps by saying:

The first thing we would like to do is express our thanks. I want to thank you for ... And I know my friends have things to thank you for as well. And so (name your friends)—you may like to say 'thank you' to God. Some may like to just be with God—in His presence.

3. Give people time to reflect and pray—

- Remember to affirm what they say.
- Listen carefully to each other and pray about what the previous person raised.
- As the prayer leader, interrupt any 'going around the circle'.
- If a person wishes to change the topic/theme and you sense that all who wished to speak on the previous theme have prayed, affirm the person and move to the next theme raised by that person.

If you have never prayed conversationally—you are about to start on an exciting journey of deep spiritual fellowship. You will find it as easy to pray as to sit around a table to speak on any theme.

Conversational Prayer—in the local café! This is a great way to pray with friends in a café, the forest, on a beach—in fact, wherever you are! If the group is comfortable praying with open eyes you will find that you can pray together anywhere. Unchurched friends will listen, and the time will come when they want to also say something to 'your God'.

Reading: Rosalind Rinker, *PRAYER Conversing With God* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI. 1972)

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