

What Is the ACTS Prayer Method?

(Extracted and summarized from: <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/what-is-the-acts-prayer-method-and-how-do-you-pray-it.html>)

This method of prayer serves as an outline or guide for prayer so you can organize your thoughts and requests. This method helps us to focus, to remain focused, and to pray using short phrases or brief statements. This allows as many as possible an opportunity to participate when we pray in groups.

The acronym ACTS stands for

- Adoration,
- Confession,
- Thanksgiving, and
- Supplication (making requests)

It's a model of prayer that is more than a century old, as it was believed to first be published as part of a story series in the August 1883 periodical *The Continent*. This model of prayer prioritizes our time with God so we first approach Him with reverence (adoration), then repent of the sin in our life (confession), then express our gratitude to Him for all He has done (thanksgiving), and finally submit to Him our requests (supplication).

How do we begin each section?

We begin each section with an appropriate verse or verses from Scripture. For example:

- For adoration:

Psa. 100:5 "For the LORD is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations."

Isaiah 40:26 "'To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?' asks the Holy One. Look up at the sky! Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing. he calls them all by name. Because of his absolute power and awesome strength, not one of them is missing."

- For confession:

Psalms 32:3-5, David prayed: "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality failed as with the dry heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not hide my guilt; I said, 'I will confess my wrongdoings to the Lord'; and You forgave the guilt of my sin."

1John 1:9 "But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness."



- For thanksgiving:

Psa. 9:1 "I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds."

Psa. 28:7 "The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart rejoices, and with my song I give thanks to him."

- For supplication (making requests):

Phil. 4:6 "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done."

How do we pray?

We pray in short phrases or very briefly. For example:

- For adoration:

- Lord, we praise you for you are good.
- God, it strengthens us to know that your steadfast love endures forever, and Your faithfulness is to all generations.
- You made the universe; you know the stars by name and not one goes missing without your consent ... you are a powerful yet personal God.

- For confession:

- I confess that this week I harboured bitter thoughts against {xxx} ... Please forgive me and help me to hand these hurts over to you. Please protect me against nursing and feeding this hurt. Help me to forgive even as You forgive me."

- For thanksgiving:

- Thank you, Lord, for xxx who brought me a cake she baked for my birthday
- Thank you for the call I received to comfort and pray with me on Wednesday
- Thank you that xxx understood and empathised with my struggle and shock that my father has terminal cancer and only a short time to live.

- For supplication:

Dear God, so many want to participate in Prayer 101; please prepare each of us with your Holy Spirit's focus and quiet to know Your Presence.



The 4 sections

Adoration: We begin by acknowledging and reminding ourselves through adoring God for Who He is. Adoration is different than thanksgiving because adoration is praising God for Who He is, whereas thanksgiving is thanking God for what He has done.

Confession: God already knows about our sins, but by confessing them, we are admitting to and acknowledging that our sin is offensive to God and agreeing with Him that we need His Son, Jesus, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Our Anglican understanding of confession is quite beautiful and comprehensive.

For example, in the prayer of confession we admit plainly: "Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen."

Thanksgiving: Scripture is very clear on our command to be grateful, and not just for what God has given us. [1 Thessalonians 5:18](#) instructs: "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." Notice the verse doesn't say "In good things give thanks" or "in the pleasantries of life, give thanks." Rather, it commands us to be thankful in everything – the good, the bad, and the ugly. As you do this, you are living out "the will of God for you in Christ Jesus" as the verse states.

When we pray with thanksgiving, we intentionally practice gratitude to God in everything, by thanking Him for the difficulties you are facing on any given day, for the things He has withheld for your own good, for the refining work He is doing in your soul, for the trials that are molding you into the image of Christ, and for the way He can redeem all things for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose ([Romans 8:28](#)).

When I begin to thank God for everything, not just the good things, it completely changes our perspective and makes us far more grateful people. Thanking God in everything gets the focus off of us and what we've been given, and puts the focus back on God, the ultimate Giver.

Supplication: In [Philippians 4:6](#), we're told not to worry about anything, "but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." We are told when we do this (ask God for our requests, along with a heart that is thankful for what God has already done, as well as for what He will do), the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (verse 7).



This is a powerful way to end every prayer time because as the psalmist says in Ps. 86:18-19, "The Lord deserves praise. Day after day he carries our burden, the God who delivers us. (Selah) Our God is a God who delivers; [He is] the LORD, the Sovereign Lord!"

4 things to consider

Prayer is an intentional activity. As Bishop Jenny Andison explains, "Prayer is conversation that lets us encounter God - it's what we're made for." In fact, God the Holy Spirit is always with us to help because He not only knows us; He knows what we need, and He desires for us to deepen in relationship with Him!

When we think of prayer there are 4 things to consider: Place; Time; Atmosphere; and Attitude.

(Extracted and adapted from The Daniel Prayer Bible Study by Anne Graham Lotz)

Place: A prepared place helps. It is a place that is intentional; where God becomes the focus; where we avoid being distracted. It may be alone; or with others who have the same intent. It could be with one or many.

This could be a specific place - a place designated for helpful materials like a Daily Prayer Devotional (e.g. Our Daily Bread; Daily Light; My Utmost for His Highest; The Daily Office; etc.); and a journal to jot down what God reveals during our time with Him.

This could even be while on your daily walk in the neighbourhood or at a park or when you walk your dog! There are apps on cell-phones like the Bible App; Bible Thru The Year App; The Daily Office - which come in handy. Apps like the Bible App and Bible Thru The Year App have an audio function so that you can listen, meditate and pray on the move. Some find it helpful to walk and pray along with a friend, a prayer partner.

If you form the habit of conversing with God by being intently aware and uttering a brief prayer anytime during the day, then anywhere would be an effective place for prayer. Typically, these would be short prayers about God's goodness, mercy and provision; or prayers which entrust some need or concern that comes up.

Time: The prophet Daniel set aside 3 times a day to pray in an upstairs private room. Jesus spent time praying, conversing with His Father in the quiet of the night after others had gone to sleep. Some of us are "morning" people, others are "owls" so there's no single best time. The best times for prayer are simply daily, intentional and prioritized times freed from distractions. For example, having a short regular prayer to commit one's day to the Lord even while one's eyes are still closed when one is still in bed, would be a helpful prayer practice. The time set aside each Sunday to worship together corporately is another example of an intentional time.



Atmosphere: Although God is Holy and we need to (and ought to) come to Him in reverence, God doesn't compel us to pray but rather He invites us; He offers us an open opportunity, a unmerited gift to encounter Him through conversation. He delights to receive us. The primary atmosphere is that of the orientation of our hearts and minds - for we are coming into the holy throne room of the King of Kings and Lord of lords; and at the same time, into the welcoming presence of our best friends who knows us thoroughly and loves us incomparably!

Physically it helps as a group to be within a sanctuary designed for worship and prayer; when we are alone, or with a few prayer partners, we can find such places whether at home or elsewhere.

In [Matthew 11:28-30](#), Jesus beckons us, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

In [John 14:6](#), Jesus assures us, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."

And in [Revelation 3:20](#), Jesus is the one who reaches out to us, "Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into his home and share a meal with him, and he with me."

Attitude Twice in my life - once as an 8-year-old, and later as an adult, I prayed on my knees. Both times, it wasn't about being on my knees that made such an impact on my prayer life but the attitude of deep respect and trust in God of the person I was with had that stirred in me a greater desire to know God and encouraged me about the trustworthiness of God. It wasn't that they knew everything there was to know about God, nor that there was no longer uncertainty or doubt in their lives. It was simply that they trusted God enough to be authentic and open with God about themselves - their circumstances, their struggles, their joys and their needs.

Job in the Old Testament presents us an excellent model of an attitude of deep respect and trust in God that is summed up in [Job 42:1-6](#) - Then Job answered the Lord and said, "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore, I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me. I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore, I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."



When we examine Job's example further,

- We observe that whenever Job prayed, he prayed in an attitude of desiring faith - Job didn't claim to have arrived "in faith" but he was determined to hope in God: "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him." (Job 13:15)
- We also observe that Job's prayers recognized that 'God is God and we are not!' He had an attitude of expectant humility: Then Job answered the Lord and said, "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add nothing more." (Job 40:3-5)
- And finally, Job's attitude in prayer was transparent and confessional while holding on to an eternal perspective: As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me! (Job 19:25-27)

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