

Prayer Resources

“Prayer is not something we pull out of the web of revelation and incarnation and then sign on to be ‘prayer warriors.’ It is more along the analogy of breathing: if we are to live, we all have to do it. Although there are illnesses connected with breathing, there are no excellences. We don’t single out individuals and say, ‘She (or he) is a great breather.’

“Prayer is woven into the fabric of life. Prayer is woven into the fabric of Jesus’ life. The notices of Jesus at prayer are part of everything else he does. None of his praying and none of his prayers can be taken out of context and studied on its own.” – Eugene Peterson

The Bible by God, via assorted servants: The Bible is full of people praying. The Bible contains the ancient prayer book we call the Psalms. It contains Jesus’ prayers. How’s *that* for a recommendation?

The Power of Prayer In a Believer’s Life by Charles Spurgeon: As fresh, astounding and helpful as the day it was published over 100 years ago. An excellent “first book” on prayer.

Hearing God by Dallas Willard: A truly effective prayer life is a truly intimate relationship with God which is a truly effective prayer life. If you’re seeking guidance from God, read this book.

Prayer by Richard Foster: The author explores the different types of prayer. Want to know what kind of prayer crying out in agony is? Check out this book.

Answering God by Eugene Peterson: We never initiate prayer. All our prayers are answers to God’s first speaking to us. Does that sound odd? Check out this book.

Prayer by Tim Keller: Like Spurgeon’s listed above, if this were your first book about prayer, it would be an exquisite choice. Early on he tells the story of how he and his wife began praying together every day. It’s about as motivational as it’s ever going to get.

Earth and Altar by Eugene Peterson: Very likely every book Peterson has written touches on prayer. One of his primary messages is that prayer is about our earthly life. It’s about our daily bread – real bread, fresh bread. It’s about our daily anxieties, failures, triumphs, laughter and tears. Peterson insists quite effectively that real prayer is not “holy talk.” Sometimes it’s grunting. You’ve had those days, right? Read this book.

Praying by J.I. Packer and Carolyn Nystrom: The authors understand that we often start praying out of a sense of duty: and God does, after all, command us to pray. But rather than denigrate duty, they show that praying dutifully can lead to delight. They do not show you how to delight in prayer. They anticipate that eventually you will, even if, for now, you’re praying because you’re supposed to.

Prayer: Conversing With God by Rosalind Rinker: One day the author surprised herself by letting God in on a conversation. It changed her approach to prayer. She reasons that, since God is already present in the conversation, why not act like it when you’re praying?

***Poustinia: Encountering God in Silence, Solitude and Prayer* by Catherine Doherty:** Really different. The author comes from an Eastern Orthodox tradition that includes the Poustinia, a sort of Russian hermitage. In her book, the Poustinia can become a metaphor for any Christian's life with God in community.

***Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer* by C.S. Lewis:** By now, the name C.S. Lewis is the most eloquent recommendation for any of his work.

***The Case for the Psalms (Why they are essential)* by N.T. Wright:** This author is in lockstep with Peterson's insistence that we pray the Psalms as community and individuals. The Church has, until recently, always done so.

Psalms, by God, via David, the sons of Korath, and assorted others: Rather than recommendation, a challenge: make time to read five a day. That's a Tim Keller discipline. See, after a few months or less, what it does to your prayer life.

***Praying with the Psalms* by Eugene Peterson:** A 365-day devotional. A good way to stay in the Psalms. If you find yourself rushing through them, ask yourself "why?"

***Tell It Slant* by Eugene Peterson:** This is book four in a 5-part series on spiritual theology. Wait! The tone is nowhere near as thick as "spiritual theology" may make it sound. Peterson calls it a "conversation," and that is exactly how the book reads. In this volume, Peterson looks at Jesus' parables and his prayers.

***Soul Keeping* by John Ortberg:** Not specifically about prayer, but it fits well with the subject as examined in the above books.