

The Studio

EPISODE // PRAYING IN PUBLIC

Praying in worship is different than praying alone. When we pray in worship, we're not just praying for ourselves, we're praying for the whole church. We're trying to put into words those things that everybody in the room might want or need to say to God. So, the words, phrases, and the way we pray in worship have to be different than the words and phrases we use when we're praying by ourselves, because prayer in worship is communal.

Often, in the church, we focus so heavily on perfecting the music, sermon, and even the announcements, that we rarely commit time to thinking through the way we pray and the effects it can have on our congregation. But, prayer is real and it is a significant part of the Christian faith, so when we're called to pray in worship, we need to always keep in mind that prayer is just as important as any other piece in a worship gathering.

Here are some things you might consider the next time you're asked to pray in worship.

- ✦ **Think about the content of your prayer.**
 - ✦ Meet with a minister to gather information.
 - ✦ Find out what's happening in the life of your church.
 - ✦ Pay attention to current events in your community and the world.

- ✦ **Think about the structure of your prayer.**
 - ✦ Determine what your prayer is doing and where your prayer is going.
 - ✦ Use Psalms as an example of prayers that start with one thought and progress to another.

- ✦ **Think about how you will deliver your prayer.**
 - ✦ Will you pray without any notes, outlines, or other help?
 - ✦ Will you read a prayer that you've written?
 - ✦ Will you use a prayer from a prayerbook in your tradition?
 - ✦ Will you use a prayer that requires the congregation to respond with their voices at different times?

- ✦ **Write down your prayer and practice praying out loud.** This helps you organize your thoughts, be concise, clear, and pray for the right amount of time. It also helps you find a voice that is natural and determines the speed of your prayer.

- ✦ **Remember to call the congregation to prayer.** You can do this by saying, "Let's pray together," or whatever is comfortable in your church.

- ✦ **Decide how to end the prayer.** A common phrase is "In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen."

As you prepare to pray in worship, don't forget to pray for God to help you lead others in prayer. As you prepare to pray in worship, don't forget to pray for God to help you lead others in prayer. We all have our own individual language, so don't be afraid to incorporate that language into your prayers. Let God speak through you the next time you're asked to pray in worship. And, know that God will hear and answer the prayers that you voice on behalf of the community.