

## **I feel stuck. How can I go deeper in prayer?**

Someone recently said to me, “My prayers haven’t progressed since childhood. I’m praying the same way I did when I was 12, just offering God one long wish list of things I want from him. How can I go deeper?”

To go deeper in prayer, we must introduce new ways of communicating with God. Remember, that’s what prayer is, talking to and listening for God’s voice. And like any relationship, it takes some intentionality to keep the conversation fresh and growing. Here are some ideas.

**Begin By Asking** – don’t forget that God is the one who calls us to pray and teaches us how to pray. If you want to go deeper in prayer, the first step is to share that longing with God.

**Pray the Scripture** – praying the words of Scripture is one of the most effective ways to break out of a rut. Turn to a familiar passage like Psalm 23 or Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord’s Prayer) and simply say in prayer what is written in those passages. You can do this with virtually every passage of Scripture.

**Add Fasting** – Fasting is not dieting. Fasting is to abstain from food or drink in order to seek the Lord. While Jesus was fasting, he was tempted by Satan to turn stones into bread to feed himself. In reply to Satan’s temptation he said, “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). In fasting, we acknowledge that we have a need that is greater than even food, a need satisfied only by God’s Word. Fasting is self-denial in an effort to focus on seeking God.

**Work at Transparency** – rather than a wish list of things you want from him or need for him to do, talk with God about your struggles, emotions and sin.

**Change Your Position** – rather than only sitting still in the same position, trying kneeling, or standing or even lying face down on the floor. Use your body to help you express your thoughts and feelings and use your arms and hands in the conversation. Lots of people talk with their hands and it works in prayer too. Lift your hands in praise or turn the palms of hands up in a posture of receiving. Don’t just say it, show it.

**Try Journaling** – rather than simply talking “at” God, you can slow the communication by writing what is on your mind and heart. Write unedited. Begin with “Dear Heavenly Father” at the top of the page and write on the page whatever comes to mind. Let it flow and then talk with God about what you have written.

**Move Your Body** – you can pray while walking, jogging, driving and even doing your chores around the house. God is always with us. Talk with him as you go about your day.

**Sing** – be creative and put your words to song or simply sing a familiar hymn or chorus that allows you to express your heart to God. Sometimes something as simple as playing worship music in the background helps take the conversation deeper.

**Draw** – engage your imagination and your body by drawing a scene from Scripture. Talk to God as you doodle or sketch or paint about what the scene says to you. Ask God to speak to you about what is unfolding in your art.

**Stay Silent** – often the hardest part of prayer is listening for the voice of God. Start with 30 seconds of silence and slowly lengthen the time you are able to sit quietly with God. Ask him to break through and talk with you.