

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR PRAYER WHEN PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

God Speaks To Us First

This fundamental truth makes it possible for us to pray. God has been concerned for each of us long before we became concerned for ourselves.

Since God invites us to listen. Our response to God's initial move is to listen to what is said. This is the basic attitude of prayer.

How To Go About Listening

What you do immediately before prayer is very important. Normally, it is something you do not rush right into. Spend a few moments quieting yourself and relaxing, settling yourself into a prayerful and comfortable position. In listening to anyone, you try to tune out everything except what the person is saying to you.

Sometimes in preparing for prayer, relax and listen to the sounds around you. God's presence is as real as they are. Be conscious of your sensations and living experiences of feeling, thinking, hoping, loving, wondering, desiring, etc. Then, conscious of God's unselfish, loving presence in you, address God simply.

God is present in you through the Spirit, who speaks to you now in scripture, and who prays in you and for you. Ask for the grace to listen to what God says. Begin reading Scripture slowly and attentively. Do not hurry to cover much material.

If it recounts an event of Jesus' life, be there in the mystery of it. Share with the persons involved, e.g., a blind man being cured. Share their attitude. Respond to what Jesus is saying. Some words or phrases carry special meaning for you. Savor those words, turning them over in your heart.

Some signs that something has struck you:

- you are happy and content just to be in God's presence;
- you are struggling with or disturbed by what the words are saying;
- you experience new meaning;
- you are moved to do something loving;

This is a time to **PAUSE**. This is God speaking directly to you in Scripture.

- Do not hurry to move on.
- Wait until you are no longer moved by the experience.

If nothing seems to be happening:

Don't get discouraged if nothing seems to be happening. Sometimes God let us feel dry and empty in order to let us realize it is not in our own power to communicate or to experience consolation. God is sometimes very close to us in seeming absence. Just stay present with a humble listening heart. This is a sign of your love for God.