

What Should I Do When I Don't Feel Like Praying?

There are days, seasons, or events in all of our lives that sometimes seem to paralyze our hearts and leave no words available to us for prayer. When this happens, the first thing to do is remember that God is still there. He is with you in whatever you are walking through. He saw what brought the grief, or the anger, or the frustration. He is there in the depression, the addiction, the pain of rejection, the times of uncertainty. Your first step is to trust that He is right where Matthew 28:20 states He said He would always be – with us! He is with you – now and always!

Next, simply breathe in His presence. Take the next breath...and the next...and the next. Adversity or dark times can suck the air from your being and it's so important to breathe God in and breathe out the issues or circumstances that may be causing your inability to pray. Think about the One who gave you life, who gave you Eternal Life, and who is Himself Living and Active. He has not abandoned you. His presence surrounds you. Soak in the awareness of this reality!

Turn your thoughts to Him. Take your thoughts and your eyes off of the difficulty, the dryness, the sadness, the anger, or whatever is keeping you bound up and put your eyes and thoughts onto Jesus – the One who can lift you out of the darkness or transport you from the desert. Worship is the best way to do this. Turn on your favorite worship music – even if you don't feel like it. Surrounding yourself with the tangible life-giving words that feed your soul is crucial if you are to be able to express your heart in prayer. Sometimes the words themselves can give voice to what you are unable to say to God in the moment. Allow God to transform you by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2) and the healing of your heart...bit by

bit.

Sometimes all you can voice is silence, so in the silence...listen. Perhaps He does have something to speak to you if you will allow Him the opportunity. How sad for us when we don't listen to God until the moments when we are unable to speak to Him. Learning to listen well should always be a vital part of our prayer lives. Prayer is two-way communication within this love relationship with our Father. It could be that you hear nothing...but then you begin to experience His peace, comfort, strength, and a knowing that He is there with you.

If you want to express something to God, let it out – it might just be a scream, a rant, or a groan. Romans 8:26-27 in the New Living Translation of the Bible says, “And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.” This is an absolutely astonishing gift! It means that when you don't have a clue what or how to pray, the Holy Spirit comes alongside of your heart and aligns it with the Father's heart. He expresses your inward thoughts, or lack of thought. He gives voice to your prayer when you have no voice of your own. He aligns your anguish, depression, anger, situation, weariness, etc. with the perfect will of God even as we struggle to find words to communicate with Him about it.

One other thing to consider when you “don't feel like praying” is that you may be involved in sinful thought or behavior that is eating away at you, and making you feel guilty. There is an enemy that wants to condemn us; however, we also have the Holy Spirit, who will convict us so that we can turn from our sin and walk again in righteousness. Sinfulness can keep God from listening to you. Take time to examine your heart, thoughts and motives to be sure that if what is needed is repentance

and asking the Father for forgiveness, you take care of this right away. Psalm 51 is a powerful prayer of repentance to use and when you are unable, or don't feel like praying, King David's words will give you your voice!

As a summary, remember these things when you don't feel like praying:

1. God is still there! Trust Him!
2. Breathe in a fresh awareness of His presence!
3. Turn your thoughts off of your issue and onto Jesus, the One who can deal with your issue. Play worship music and join in! Focusing on Jesus is a good antidote to situations that keep us from wanting to pray, or knowing what to say in prayer.
4. Silence/Listening – sometimes it is best to simply get quiet and listen for the voice of God. There is healing in stillness and wisdom in listening. Remember – even if you don't sense that you hear anything from God, He is there.
5. Remember that the Holy Spirit is there to give voice to your prayers in alignment with the will of the Father when you are unable.
6. Consider that what might be causing your inability to pray or your lack of desire for prayer might be sinfulness in your life. Use Psalm 51 as your prayer so that God can reveal the hidden things, and so that you can take the time to repent and confess. Your relationship will be fully restored and a prayer of thankfulness will likely be the result.