

Teens-2-pray: Prayer is made easy when you write it down!

Why start a prayer journal? To journal is not a new law or commandment, but only a practical way in helping you to concentrate and to keep record of answers to prayer, even to be kept for future generations! Believers who choose to keep a prayer journal today are taking part in a cherished Christian tradition while also creating a record of their faith for the next generation. George Müller, a famous English evangelist who lived in the 1800s, is well known for his prayer journal. Müller recorded his prayers in a book and never stopped praying for his requests. He simply continued until he could record an answer. Prayer journaling is a way to remember what God has done, is doing and will do for us. It is helpful to journal. To journal may help you. Try it for at least some time.

Focus that wandering mind! It is easy to spend more time worrying than praying. A prayer journal is a simple and meaningful way to simply 'start praying' on paper as you write out those issues troubling your heart and mind. It helps you to focus so your thoughts will not wander into worrying again!

Keep a record! The longer you keep a prayer journal, the more answered prayers you'll record. Over time, you will have a book filled with the evidence of God's faithfulness in your life. Many believers find that during times of stress or discouragement, reading through an old prayer journal can provide renewed hope and peace.

See how God works! Believers who keep a prayer journal often come to see how God is guiding their lives. Because they are able to track both their prayers and God's answers, they can sometimes see how God's plans are different to, but better than their own. Part of prayer is listening. When you study Scripture regarding God's ways in a specific situation or about a problem you prayed about, it will be easier for you to discern how God wants you to live.

Give it time! It will take some discipline to get into the habit of keeping a prayer journal, but do not give up too quickly. Soon you will be completely rid of the frustration of wandering thoughts when you want to pray and read your Bible!

How to keep a Prayer Journal

Prepare your journal: **Step 1:** Get together all you'll need: A journal (it can be a simple school manuscript), writing stuff of your choice and your Bible. **Step 2:** Date your entries. You can divide the entry into two sections: 'Requests' and 'Praises/Thanksgiving'. Under the 'Requests' heading, write down your prayer requests, whether personal requests or requests on behalf of others. **Step 3:** Under the 'Praises/Thanksgiving' heading, record items you are thankful for and prayers that have been answered. You can pray for each item as you list it and each section as you finish it, or you can wait until you have finished recording the entire entry and use it as an outline as you pray. **Step 4:** Leave some space at the bottom or on the reverse side of every page. This is where you will record answers to prayers, observations, and Scripture quotes that seem relevant to situations you are praying for, notes from daily devotions. Review the journal pages every few days or weeks and record any answers or observations.

Find a quiet space where you can reflect and hear God's voice. It can be as simple as your favourite chair, restaurant, beach or park. You just need to be where there are minimal distractions and you are relaxed.

Begin with a humble heart. Do not just start writing in your journal. Before you write one word or date, take your Bible and read a few verses to quiet your heart before God. Let Him direct the prayers you will write down. Let Him first speak to you.

Make a list: After you have spent time with God, start writing. Do not rush through this step by simply making a list. You can start by writing out your

prayers to God and making a list of things you want to pray about as you continue elsewhere on the page. (Website: <http://www.go-journal.com>).

Reflect on what you have written. Is there anything else He wants you to pray for? Listen again, quietly. Write down any other thoughts.

Testify: Ask the Holy Spirit to prompt you when there are opportunities to share with others something from your time with God. Do so carefully that you may encourage them, without giving offense.