**What do I do with a prayer journal?**

**First,** it’s not a grocery list for God. Don’t jot down a few items every day, telling Him when and where to deliver. Instead, it’s an outpouring of your heart. So don’t sit down to journal until your heart is full! Make sure you’re awake, attentive, and holding a cup of coffee if needed. Find a silent, isolated spot if at all possible. Sit there, still and listening, for at least a full minute to focus your heart and mind on the Lord. Spend some time in worship and reading scripture before you ever pick up a pen.

**Consider** even your bodily posture: does your time of prayer call for standing with eyes up and hands raised? Or lying on the ground, head bowed? Let your entire body reflect the posture of your heart. You may also want to create a mental picture of your very prayer: see the Lord on His throne (Isaiah 6) and see yourself standing before Him, justified to be there only because of the blood of Jesus.

**There are so many things to write in a prayer journal!** Here are a few:

**Praise** Him for who He is, either in the Bible or in your own life. Praise is simply identifying a characteristic of God and meditating on that.

**Thank** Him, challenging yourself to consider the mundane, the stressful, the boring, or even the downright bad. Believe He is in control and using this situation to mold you. Tell Him your fears, your anxieties, your weaknesses, and your frustrations *as you thank Him for them*.

**Confess** your sin to Him. Often that involves first asking Him to reveal sin to us, because we are usually quite bad at seeing it. Confess the sins of your family, your friends, your community, your church, your country, and your world. This is holy lament, and it allows us to experience the heart of God.

**Voice** a prayer of dependence and submission. Give up trying to be the god of a situation and really turn it over to Him. Repeat as needed.

**Re-write** a scripture using personal pronouns, your own name, or your own situation. Use prayers or psalms as your template.

**Write out** the Bible passage you read earlier, describing how it applies to your life or the life of someone you love. Turn that verse into a prayer and keep it on your mind throughout the day.

**Take one word** or very short phrase that stood out from your Bible reading and make that the focus of your prayer.

**Honestly reveal** your emotions to God: fear, stress, failure, uncertainty, joy, expectation, trepidation, and more. You’re not fooling Him, so be honest with yourself. Give Him glory, trusting His plan for your life.

**Affirm** your faith that the Holy Spirit Himself voices your prayers to God Almighty; they need not be perfect or beautiful. Just honest.

**Invite** God to reveal the deepest desires of your heart and help you see the root cause of your concerns. Ask Him, “What am I praying about but haven’t really turned over to you, Lord?” Remember that we offer our prayers as a sacrifice, entrusting the results to Him.

**Reflect** upon how God has worked in your own life. Pray that He will see, hear, and act according to His wisdom, not your own requests.

**Linger** there after your words have ended. Give time for His peace and presence to fill you and strengthen you for the day.