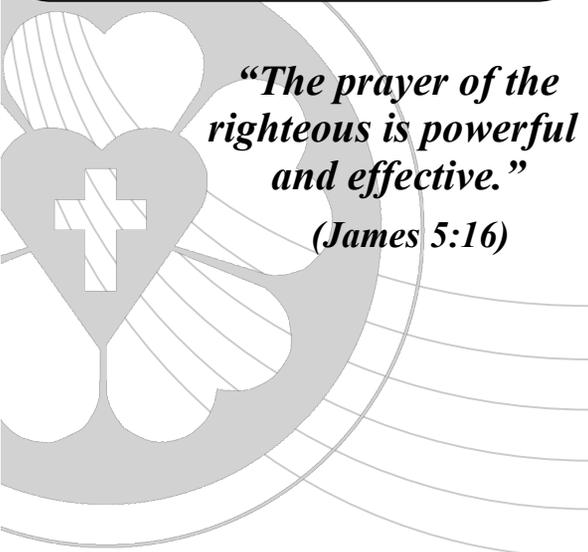


*“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)*



*“The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”  
(James 5:16)*

## A Form for Prayer

Prayer is calling upon God in faith. When we pray, there is no required wording or format; we simply speak to God. But even those who pray regularly on their own may feel uncomfortable when called upon to lead prayer in a public setting.

Overcoming shyness in public prayer takes practice and experience. Many people find it helpful to have a guide or simple structure. One basic prayer format that is easy to learn is represented by the acronym A.D.T.R.C. (pronounced “add-track”). The initials of the name stand for the five basic parts found in most prayers: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, and Conclusion.

## ADTRC Pattern for Prayer

*Not all these parts are found in every prayer, but they are often present in some manner.*

### **A: Address**

*They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, “They are my people;” and they will say, “The Lord is our God.” (Zech. 13:9)*

The first words of a prayer are often the **Address**, where we call upon the name of God. Just as when we are sending a letter or an email, the address specifies the identity of the one to whom we are sending the message. Formal Christian prayer is usually addressed to the first person of the Trinity — God the Father — but this is not always the case. Some examples of an *Address* might be:

*Lord God ... Heavenly Father ...  
Most merciful God ... Gracious Lord ...*

### **D: Description**

*Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; worship the LORD in holy splendor. (Psalm 29:1b-2)*

Following the address is often some sort of **Description**, explaining what prompted the prayer. Sometimes it may be a description of the nature of God, and why we trust God to call upon Him. Or, it may be a description of the situation at hand for us, and why we are in need of God’s help. Some examples of a *Description* might look like this:

*You are the one who ... You have given ...  
You have promised to ... or:  
We are facing a difficult time ...  
We have sinned against you ...*

### **T: Thanks**

*I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise you. (Psalm 35:18)*

One common element in public prayer is **Thanks**, where we express to God our gratitude for all that God has done. The thanks may be specific to the prayer at hand, or a more general expression of praise for God’s goodness. Examples of *Thanks* are:

*We give you thanks for ...  
We appreciate ... We praise you for ...*

### **R: Request**

*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)*

In the most basic sense, the word *pray* means to ask. Making a **Request** of God is nothing to be ashamed of; it is at the heart of prayer. Jesus taught us to “ask and you will receive.” He showed us that expressing our need to God is essential to faith and trust in God. Also referred to in prayer as a “petition,” examples of a *Request* might look like this:

*We ask that you would ...  
Help us to ... Please forgive us for ...*

### **C: Conclusion**

*Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)*

The final part of a prayer is the **Conclusion**. In it, we commend our prayer to God, trusting in the promise that God has made to hear us. Traditionally, Christian prayers are made “in the name of Jesus” — by or through

the power of the Holy Spirit. Trinitarian doxologies are often used in formal worship, but simple commendations are heard just as often. Some examples of a *Conclusion* might be like these:

*In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*

*In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen*

Note: The word “Amen” means “indeed” or “truly” or “may it be so.” It is meant to call for and serve as the response of others to a prayer that has been offered, rather than simply being a religious way to say “the end” at the conclusion of a prayer.



Of course, using a formal structure does not make a prayer more valid or effective than any other. But having a format like the ADTRC pattern can help to organize a person’s thoughts and allow a person to feel more comfortable and at ease, especially in public settings. The key with prayer is to do it. We express our faith and trust in God when we call upon him — especially in our times of need.

*Remember the Old Railroader’s Advice:*

***“When you get to the end of the line ... add track!” (ADTRC)***

## **Suggested Scripture for Those Wanting Help with Prayer:**

There are hundreds of examples of prayers throughout the Scriptures that can be used as models in our own devotional life. For those looking to use Scripture as a guide to prayer, a helpful place to begin would be in the **Book of Psalms**.

Many of the Psalms are prayers to God. The various prayers demonstrate the wide variety of emotions and experiences reflected in the lives of people of faith: from the confession of physical and spiritual need, to the joy of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Jesus gave his disciples guidance on how to think about prayer, and even what to say. Some of his advice can be found in **Matthew 6:5-15** and **Luke 11:5-13**.



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# Lord, Teach Us To Pray



*Sola Publishing – Educational Series:*

## **What Does This Mean?**

*Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray ...”*  
*(Luke 11:1 NRSV)*