

Praying with an enquirer

When people ask you to pray for them, gently ask if you can also pray *with* them, here, now, or at an agreed time. You can then help them experience the presence of Jesus, and learn simple heart prayer for themselves.

Make him real

Praying with someone who wants God to intervene in their life is a wonderful privilege. I often find a deep tenderness of heart, and tears come as I do. I remember praying with one elderly woman, and she said afterwards, in a puzzled tone, “You pray as if... as if he is right here.” I laughed with delight and said, “But he is!” That seemed a new thought to her.

Keep it simple

The more simple and natural our prayer with an enquirer is, the less mystique we convey about prayer. We need to reveal by our prayers that he is real, and present, and deeply interested, and wonderfully able. I believe we need to pray in a way that they can imitate immediately. So a conversational style, without clichés or lots of words they wouldn’t know the meaning of will be helpful. Not long, or intense, but with a sense of delight in the Lord and quiet confidence. I remember hearing an evangelist in a training session say that as he prays simply with seekers, he is also praying furiously and intensely in his spirit! That is a good thought – that two ‘layers’ of prayer can be happening as we pray.

And please avoid using lots of names of God. “*Dear Father God, we love you Lord Jesus. Help us Father God, to love you, Father God...*” Instead of repeating names (which we never do in a natural conversation) become comfortable with a pause while you find the next phrases. In the spaces God is at work. Don’t feel you have to fill the silence all the time.

Weave some simple scriptural truths into your prayer so you are conveying not just feeling or need, but the spiritual realities we base our prayer on. Such as, “*Lord Jesus, thank you that you are here with us now. Thank you that you look on us with love and compassion....*” Include yourself in the prayer, using ‘us’ – then bring Jenny or Bill or _____ before him.

Share what he gives you

It is possible that the Lord may give you a picture, or some scripture or an encouraging word for them. Offer them very gently. This will all be very new and perhaps startling to them. But a personal word can convey God’s intimate knowledge and love in a very special way. Write it down for them to keep.

Be cautious about touch. It can be incredibly meaningful to hold their hand or put a hand on their shoulder – but a hand on the head or anywhere else is sure to be way out of their comfort zone. If they are sitting down don’t tower over them, get down to their level, kneeling on the floor if necessary! If your hand shakes a lot when you pray with them – lift it off. It could frighten them. They can still experience his presence without our touch. Open your eyes when you pray – you can then see what God is doing in them. (I often sit in cafes and pray with others with my eyes open.)

Agreeing in prayer

If you have the time, writing out a prayer that an enquirer can pray at home is a great idea. Then you can both be praying the same prayer for that situation. You can do this by either writing it on the spot – if you have notepaper with you (and make a copy for yourself) or get their email or address and go home and type up a prayer, make two copies, and get it to them that day. It should express their need and God’s promises, in simple every day language. Agree to pray it each day for a week, and ask them to get back to you. Always leave them with your name and phone number.

This helps them begin to pray simply to God, and also have a sense that they can partner with you in the process. Encourage them to add their own words to that prayer. It is a framework, not a formula. Most

seekers feel totally inadequate and unable to find the right words. Giving them simple prayers 'breaks the sound barrier' and helps them find their own words.

Teaching them to pray

We have produced a small booklet called 'Starting to Pray' which you can purchase and pass on to those you are encouraging to call upon the Lord. It assumes that as an enquirer sincerely turns towards God and asks for his help, the Lord will in mercy begin to act and reveal himself. No – they have not yet 'become a believer' or prayed a salvation prayer – but I believe any cry to the Lord from a needy heart is heard and in mercy responded to. Faith for salvation will come. *'The kindness of God leads us to repentance.'* Romans 2:4
The booklet has a prayer for mercy and forgiveness included in it.

When you give it, pray that their prayers will be from their heart to his heart. Ask them later which prayers helped them. You could write out more prayers for them, based on promises from the Word.

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