

CHRISTIAN PRAYER

Shelter. They help the poor, the hungry and the homeless in the under-developed countries, too—by supporting organisations like Christian Aid, Oxfam and War on Want—and also work for social justice and human rights throughout the world.

Christian Prayer

Christians who practise their religion centre their lives on God. For they believe that man was made for God. As the great Christian teacher St. Augustine said in the fifth century, "God has made us for himself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in him." So, as well as joining in public worship and caring for other people, Christians also keep in personal touch with God by prayer, which St. Augustine described as "the turning of the heart to God".

Christians normally pray at least twice a day—in the morning and evening. Before speaking to God, they remember that he is present with them, and remain quiet for a few moments. When they talk to God, Christians use five different types of prayer. They adore, or praise, God; confess their sins and ask for his forgiveness; thank him for his great goodness and many blessings; pray for other people; and pray for themselves.

Sometimes Christians use prayers from a book. But very often they speak to God quite simply and naturally



Christians praying in a modern Church, Lincoln

in their own words. Some Christians—especially members of Pentecostal churches—also "speak in tongues" when they pray, like many of the early Christians. St. Paul wrote about this particular type of prayer in his First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 14.

But Christians do not only talk to God when they pray. They also listen to God speaking to them through the words of Holy Scripture. This type of prayer is called meditation. It helps Christians to know God better, love him more, and serve him more faithfully in their daily lives.

Many Christians meditate every day for twenty minutes or half an hour. They sometimes call this their "Quiet Time" with God. After praying for the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, they read slowly a short passage of Scripture—often from one of the four Gospels. Then they

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With the author's
Compliments
and
best wishes.

John Caring Allen.

John Allen
- former
incumbent
book published
in 1978