

Engaging with God

It can be easy to rush into God's presence, say a few words and rush out again, without ever really engaging with Him. Below are some ideas to help you focus upon the Lord as you begin to pray.

1) Invite the Holy Spirit to lead you into the presence of your Father.

Sit quietly listening to your breathing then imagine that your Heavenly Father is standing in front of you. As you draw in a breath pray: *"Abba Father"* and as you release the breath pray: *"I belong to You."* Repeat a few times, slowing down until you begin to sense His presence.

2) Slowly read through a Bible verse and allow the words to lead you into stillness.

For example use the verse Psalm 46:10 and slowly pray it one word at a time ie "Be"..... "Be still....." "Be still and....." all the time turning your focus towards the Lord. Other verses you could use are Psalm 37:7, Matthew 11:28, James 4:8a

3) Light a candle and focus on it.

Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12) After a few minutes speak out words of praise to Jesus that: He is the light of the world, that He has overcome the darkness, that He is present with you.

4) Worship the Lord.

Psalm 100:4 says: *"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name."* Sing a couple of worship songs. Thank the Lord for all the ways that He has blessed you. Praise Him for who He is.

5) Focus on a picture.

Spend some time looking at a picture that speaks of the Lord's love. (eg Charlie Mackesy Prodigal Son/Daughter) Ask the Lord to draw close to you and speak to you as you look at the image.

6) Hold something in your hands as you begin to pray.

Holding a "holding cross" can be helpful to begin focusing the heart towards the Lord. If you are feeling particularly burdened you may want to pick up a heavy stone and as you begin to engage with the Lord lay the stone down in front of you, symbolically handing over your worries to Him.

7) Set up an empty chair in the room where you are praying.

Imagine that Jesus is sitting on the empty chair. As you focus on Jesus, begin to talk with Him.

8) Pray in physical ways.

Your body posture can help you begin to focus your heart upon the Lord. As you begin to pray, kneel down before the Lord in silence. As you become aware of Him you may lie prostrate before Him or you could stand and lift up your hands towards Him.

9) Use a couple of prayers written by other people.

Sometimes we find it hard to know what to say as we begin to pray. Choose a couple of prayers written by other people to start you off and help you focus.

10) Minimize the distractions

As you sit in silence, write down any persistent thoughts that come to you, so that you can attend to them later. Speak your prayers out loud to help you focus upon the Lord.