

4. My experience of prayer

- a) Has my praying changed in recent years? If so how?
- b) What struggles do I have as I seek to pray?
- c) Do these difficulties tell me anything about how I look at prayer, what I expect of myself in prayer and how I see God
- d) In what ways do I sense a desire for my praying to develop?
- e) Are there ways in which I pray, but have never acknowledged or recognised as prayer?

5. Pray...

Taking time to look over what has emerged...

I acknowledge my thoughts and feelings to God...

I ask God's help for my hopes and needs in my prayer life...

Considering my praying

A perspective...

Seven directions of prayer

Reaching downwards and delving,
we are rooted in our true ground.

Reaching upwards and yearning,
we adore the One who is beyond us.

Being slimmed by admitting the truth,
we enter life by a narrow gate.

In opening our arms to our neighbour,
we forgive to seventy times seven.

Reaching backwards into the past,
we absorb what is good and are thankful.

Reaching forwards into the future,
we give of ourselves in trust.

Becoming still in the present,
we rest in the silence of being.

from 'Exploring' by Jim Cotter

Reflection

Reflect on your prayer. Ponder its influences, its nature, your understanding and experience. It may be helpful to jot down what emerges from your reflections.

1. How did you learn to pray?

One of his disciples said to him “Lord teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” *Luke 10:14*

- a) How has the way I pray been influenced by others?
- b) Who has helped and who has hindered?

2. How do I pray?

Jesus said ‘Go into your room, close the door ...’ *Matthew 6:6*

- a) What are the present attributes of my praying?
where: the places, when: the times, how: the postures,
with what: the foci, symbols ...
- b) What have proved most helpful?

3. My practice of prayer

Jesus said ‘When you pray say: “Father...”’ *Luke 11:2*

- a) What are the ways of praying that I use?
- b) What are my favourite words and phrases when praying?
- c) To whom do I most frequently address my prayers and what names or titles do I like to use?

Are there differences between the way I see my relationship with God/Creator, Son and Holy Spirit?
- e) Is prayer for me more a gift or more a task? Reflect on this.
- f) In prayer, do I have a sense of how God sees me?
- g) In prayer, how do I see God?