

## EXTEMPORANEOUS (FREE) PRAYER

There are many different ways to pray freely or extemporaneously, probably as many as there are different kinds of people. A lot of the time you'll probably want to just pray as your heart leads you. At other times it may be helpful to have a basic structure to help you cover the basics of what should go into a prayer.<sup>1</sup>

A popular model for prayer uses the acronym **ACTS**:

- Adoration (expressing love and praise)
- Confession (telling God our sins and shortcomings)
- Thanksgiving
- Supplication (prayers for our own needs and the needs of others)

This is a helpful model because it follows the one commonly used in worship by many churches. Here at St. Andrew's we have our Opening Prayers (of Adoration and Confession) and the Pastoral Prayer (of Thanksgiving and Supplication) at the end of the service.

Rosalind Rinker offers another formula, attaching a New Testament passage to each stage:

1. Jesus is here (Matthew 18:19-20)

*Jesus said: "Truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."*

2. Help me, Lord (James 5:13-16)

*Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.*

3. Thank you, Lord (Philippians 4:4- 7)

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 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.*

4. Help my brother (Mark 11:22-25)

*Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Philip Yancey, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* (2010 Zondervan, Grand Rapids) p.180.