

“What can I do to make my prayers less repetitive and more meaningful?”

The scriptures clarify that *vain* repetition is the problem (see Matthew 6:7). Sometimes you will need to repeat important things in your prayers. But if you repeat words without thinking, you’re not really communicating with Heavenly Father. To avoid vain repetition, learn to pray with “real intent” (see 2 Nephi 31:13; Moroni 7:9; 10:4)—that is, pray with sincerity and with the intent to act in faith.

In 3 Nephi the Savior’s disciples prayed “without ceasing,” yet “they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray” (3 Nephi 19:24). The Holy Ghost can guide your prayers and make them more meaningful (see Romans 8:26). It also helps to make time to pray in a quiet place when you are not hurried.

Finally, think of the many different things you can pray about. You enjoy many blessings each day, and you need heavenly help in many situations. Thank Heavenly Father for your blessings, and pray for things you need. You can pray for forgiveness, help in trials, a stronger testimony, and protection against temptation. **NE**



Unselfish Prayers

Sometimes when we pray, I think we are selfish—just thinking of ourselves and what we want. Think of others and their needs too. Count every blessing, and thank Heavenly Father for them. Prayer is not just for Heavenly Father to listen to our wants and complaints but also for us to listen to Him. How are we to receive revelation if we just quickly say what we want and then hop into bed? Ask Him what He would want you to do. You will become a better person.

Rebecah W., 16, Idaho, USA



Let the Holy Ghost Guide You

Take time to ponder which things you are most grateful for and which things are of greatest need in your life. The Spirit will guide you and will give you answers and suggestions that will come as ideas, thoughts, or promptings. You might also keep a journal in which you can record these thoughts and ideas for future reference.

Elder Sebo, 21, Texas Houston Mission

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.



Reflect on Your Day

When I pray at night, I think of what I read in the scriptures. I try to remember what I

was able to do right and what I need to improve on. I can ask Heavenly Father to help me with that day's difficulties. I ask Him to always help me remember His counsel and give me strength to follow it. Since every day is different, even if we have a routine, different things will always happen. That being the case, upon reflecting about our day, we will always have different things to ask for and be thankful for.

Kétia F., 20, Palmas, Brazil



Pray Aloud

Find a time and place where you can be alone and pray out loud.

When you pray vocally, it feels so much more personal and meaningful. It's easier to avoid vain repetitions and to prevent your mind from wandering. It's really like a conversation with Heavenly Father.

Elder Marra, 20, Colorado Colorado Springs Mission

Pray and Then Listen

As you feel the need to trust in the Lord and improve the quality of your relationship with Him, think about what you want and kneel down in prayer. Imagine Heavenly Father, and talk to Him like your Father, which He is. Tell Him everything you feel. Have a sincere conversation, heart to heart. Trust in Him, thank Him, ask Him for forgiveness, enjoy His

companionship, express your love to Him, and then listen closely for answers.

Raúl A., 20, Mexico City, Mexico



Pray for Specifics

Planning ahead, even if just for a few minutes to compose your thoughts and most

sincere desires, ensures that you will focus more on the words you are saying to your Heavenly Father. Think of your family, extended family, and others who may need your prayers. There are so many people who need help, guidance, and protection.

Focusing on specific blessings and praying in detail can change the usual "Please bless me to have a good day" to "Please guide me in my decisions to set a positive example for others." Those are the prayers you will hold dear to your heart because they are more Christlike—the way they are supposed to be.

Hannah T., 14, Maryland, USA

NEXT QUESTION

"My parents aren't members. I'm afraid to talk to them about the Church. How can I share the gospel with them without offending them?"

Send your answer by January 15, 2009, to:

**New Era, Questions & Answers 1/09
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org**

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter:

FULL NAME

BIRTH DATE

WARD (OR BRANCH)

STAKE (OR DISTRICT)

I grant permission to print response and photo:

SIGNATURE

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (IF YOU ARE UNDER 18)



PRAY WITH SINCERITY

"As we pray, let us really communicate with our Father in Heaven. It is easy to let our prayers become repetitious, expressing words with little or no thought behind them. When we remember that each of us is literally a spirit son or daughter of God, we will not find it difficult to approach Him in prayer. He knows us; He loves us; He wants what is best for us. Let us pray with sincerity and meaning, offering our thanks and asking for those things we feel we need. Let us listen for His answers, that we may recognize them when they come. As we do, we will be strengthened and blessed."

President Thomas S. Monson, "How Firm a Foundation," Ensign, Nov. 2006, 67.