

The ACTS Method of Prayer

One of the simplest and most common patterns for prayer is called the ACTS method. ACTS is an acronym that stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

The first movement of the ACTS method is **adoration**, or praise. In adoration, we give God praise for who He is all-wise, ever-present, all-loving, gracious, merciful, all-powerful, and so much more. So, why is it important to begin prayer with adoration? Does God really need to be flattered by our affirmations of his love and goodness? No, of course not. Adoration has two main effects: 1) it reminds us of how remarkable and capable God is and grows our confidence in God to hear and answer our prayers. 2) Adoration postures our hearts to come humbly before the God of all creation. As we affirm the attributes of God, we are reminded that he is God and we are not.

The second movement of ACTS is **confession**. In confession, we admit our failures before God and seek forgiveness. Furthermore, we commit to repentance—to refrain from further sin and to live differently. We echo the prayer of King David who said, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgression...” (Psalm 51) and we know that God is quick to forgive us.

Once our hearts are made right before God in confession, we proceed to the next movement of the ACTS method: **thanksgiving**. Giving thanks is different from adoration. In thanksgiving, we consider the specific ways that God has demonstrated his love and blessings to us. We name our blessings and give God thanks for them.

The fourth and final movement of ACTS is **supplication**. In supplication we bring the needs of others and ourselves to God. In the context of prayer, Jesus says, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9).

To try the ACTS Method, follow the prompts below and feel free to express any additional thoughts or feelings along the way. Bear in mind that a pattern for prayer is not a formula. You can’t mess it up. It’s simply a structure to help you stay focused and to guide your heart and mind into God’s presence.

Adoration

“God, I give you praise because you are (list as many attributes as you desire)

_____.

Confession

“God, I acknowledge that I have not completely honored you with my words and actions. Please forgive me for _____ . I repent and will take steps so that I don’t continue to sin in these ways. Thank you for your forgiveness.”

Thanksgiving

“God, I give you thanks for (list all the things that you are grateful to God for)

_____.

Supplication

“God, I ask that you would act in the following situation(s): _____.”