

As I sat in the midst of a long, boring prayer circle I thought to myself (for the hundredth time) “Why don’t people make prayer more simple?” I’ve noticed a trend when people pray aloud; the tendency to babble. Without being judgmental, I want to say that it is possible to pray simply the thoughts on your mind and heart. When you’re done...just stop talking.

Whether praying in a group of people or alone I simplify things by just saying what I need to say, but then I pause after a few sentences to give God an opportunity to speak. Some time ago I got into the habit of asking gGod questions and then pausing and waiting for the answer. Often I will write down the question. By the way when I have asked God intentional questions I have been astounded at the many times and various ways He has answered me.

\*I find it easier to order my prayer times in some sort of structure. Below I have a few of the prompts that I use to guide me in prayer. I take about 10-15 minutes and use these simple lines as a kind of conversation starter with God.

**Q**uiet my heart... Usually when I go to pray I am anxious about something. Whether it is the beginning, middle, or end of the day I usually have some sort of anxiety running through my mind and heart. When I take a few minutes and ask God to quiet my heart, I usually open up to Psalm 23 or Psalm 25, and I ask God to calm me down basically.

**U**nderstanding... usually there is a relational issue I am working with family, friends, or co-workers. I usually ask God to help me understand people better.

**I**ntent...I regularly pray for God to “strengthen my heart’s intent”. When I pray this phrase I mean that I truly desire to obey God, walk in holiness, etc. However, I am keenly aware that I usually don’t do what I mean to do. I ask God to strengthen me to do what I intend to do for Him.

**E**mpower everyone... much of my prayer time is centered on me so it helps to search around my heart and pray for friends, family, and coworkers. I ask God to empower them, help them, and use them.

**T**each me... I use this usually as a way to ask God to help me understand the Scriptures. I want to have true understanding when I read the Bible and not merely facts.