

SOME OBSTACLES TO PRAYER

sometimes we find it hard.... but there are things we can do to help.....

One of the first things that happens when we pray is that we get distracted. Expect distractions! Rather than get frustrated it is helpful is to know how to handle them. Sometimes there are other obstacles to our prayer life.

The big distraction—“Internal noise”

- Sometimes we have a busy mind and heart because we are rushed.
- We are not actually ‘present’ at our prayer time.
- Sometimes I am trying to pray too soon after a demanding activity to pray and have not taken the time to slow down mentally and physically to pray
- but keep thinking about the many things that I am to do

try

- Slowing down with a breathing exercise and consciously tell yourself you are entering a time of prayer
- With distractions in prayer, if they keep popping up, practise simply placing it in God’s care and ask him to remind you of all the things that may have to be done after your prayer time.

Fear

- Sometimes we become afraid of praying because we feel
- God may ask something of me.
- God may ask me to prove my love, to do something I’m not sure I’m ready to do.

- I feel really sinful, I am not perfect, and I feel God must be repulsed by me.... Consequently I can’t really be myself in prayer time. I have to ‘put on an act.’

try

- Gently remind yourself that God does not want you to suffer. Suffering does not please God. Think of someone who you really love, do you want that person to be in pain? And so it is in God’s relationship with you
- Reflect on your image of God. Is God more a ‘judge’ than a ‘lover’ for you? pray with ‘www.fathersloveletter.com’ and be immersed in God’s love for you

Anger

Sometimes a deep obstacle to our growing in prayer is because we have some deeper struggles in our life. We may refuse to share with God the real things that are going on. Sometimes we are unconsciously saying

- I can’t share it with you. Things have happened in my life that I am hurt by. God, if you cared you would have prevented it.....
- I don’t measure up, I’m not perfect. God, you have made me weird and not perfect. Its your fault that I am the way that I am.....
- I am angry at the church and I am angry at you..... I can’t even put my feelings into words. So I won’t bother. I’m not going to bother spending time

with someone I'm really angry with!

try

- Allow the feelings to surface and be present. Tell God how you are truly feeling.
- Take the time to exhaust the intensity of feelings by spending time with them, writing them out in a journal. Gradually it will become less intense the more it is shared. Sharing stuff with God is prayer!
- Sometimes a necessary step is to find someone to trust with your hurt feelings and thoughts

try a website:

www.fathersloveletter.com

www.sacredspace.ie/en

getting started

From all that I've read, what would I feel as an obstacle for me in prayer?

What have I identified as a prayer experience or method that works for me?

WHAT WORKS 4U?

Rather than focus on problems, its more helpful to focus on what actually works for you in prayer. Consider the following:

- Do I like prayer by myself or with others?
- Do I have a favorite chair or space or place that is restful and makes me feel at peace. Is it outside, somewhere at home, in a church or sacred space...
- Do I enjoy music to help me reflect and feel connected with God and my spiritual journey
- What have I tried in the past that has worked for me in prayer
- Do I connect with God through 'doing stuff' or do I prefer personal prayer time by myself 'in quiet'
- Do I know someone who I notice is 'prayerful - prayer-full' and might welcome me to have a chat about how they pray
- St Ignatius of Loyola recommends when we experience a God moment to 'repeat' it. He calls this practice 'repetition'. What practice or experience would you like to try and 'repeat' to bring you into an experience of prayer and being with God.
- If you were to list or draw the top 5 feelings, thoughts, struggles you had this past week what it look like