

Praying aloud (especially in the Service)

Praying aloud in the congregation (and even in small groups) is somewhat different to praying by yourself. Here are some helpful suggestions and thoughts when it comes to your turn to pray.

- It would be helpful to think about what you're going to pray about before hand, rather than the evening before, or having a 'set prayer' from weeks gone past.
- Write out your prayer and read over it. When presenting it, speak loudly and clearly into the microphone (see advice in reading the Bible aloud)
- Use the suggested outline of how to and what to pray for (ACTS method)
A- adoration
C- confession
T- thanksgiving
S- supplication

Adoration

This means to adore, worship, to praise and to tell how great God is. You may like to read a passage such as:

- ❑ Psalms,
- ❑ passages about God's character ie. Love, faithfulness, grace, mercy, majesty, wisdom;
- ❑ explain what the gospel is;
- ❑ explain more about Jesus eg. Col 1:15-20 etc

So in your prayer, you may like to start by reading a passage from the above, and then pray about the fantastic things about God and what he has done.

eg. Ps 19. That the law of the Lord is perfect for reviving the soul, your trustworthy, and the law is precious etc; or Ps 89, declares how great his love is, his faithfulness, that you have made a covenant with Him etc.

Confession

This is asking God to forgive us for ignoring Him in our lives. It is the time in which we can confess our disobedience to Him and doing things our own way rather than God's way. Asking that God would forgive us for these things (see John 1:8-10), and that He would purify us and make us more like Jesus.

Thanksgiving

Think about the endless list of things that you can thank God for. Here are some starters:

- our church: leaders, pastors etc.
- the country we live in
- our daily needs – food, clothes, homes, families etc.

- education opportunities
- employment
- friends, neighbours
- freedom as Australians
- For Jesus and what He has done for us. (Eph 1; 2 Tim 1:8-12; Eph 2:8-9; Rom 5:8-9; Tit 3:3-8)

Supplication

This means requests, asking God who is the provider for certain things. Here's a list of suggestions:

For your non-Christian friends that they may come to know Jesus, opportunities to talk to them, for family, exams, work, the Prime Minister, teachers at school and Uni, employers, pastors, leaders, Sunday School, individual people who haven't been for a while, current wars and world issues like Aids, missionaries that we support, pray for specific countries, eg. China (Check out the book Operation World by Patrick Johnson), leaders of other nations, Christians around the world who are under persecution. Pray too, that the gospel would spread into the schools, for the leaders of the church – pastors and deacons, those who are in physical need i.e the sick and the elderly. In all these things, pray that our Godliness would be evident, we would love all and our faith would persevere in times of trial.

For our own church community, pray for both the Chinese and English services, the church building fund, for the Sunday School, for us to individually pray, read God's Word, and that we would be faithful in attending and promoting Christian groups available to us at school, Uni, work etc.

The list of subjects to pray for are endless, just think:

JOY: Jesus, Others Yourself.

Look at how Paul prays in Col 1:9-14; Phil 1:9-11; Eph 1:15-23; Eph 3:14-21; 2 Thess 1:11-12; how Jesus prays the Lord's Prayer and how others prayed in the Old Testament Neh 1:4-11; 2 Sam 7:18-29.

Obviously you're not going to pray about all these things every Sunday, as you'll be there all day!!! You may like to choose some items from each category (ACTS) to pray for one week, then some different items for the other weeks of the month. For eg. Praising God about His awesome faithful and love for His people, then confession, thanking Him for some things, and presenting requests to Him.

As you are praying on behalf of the congregation, you need to be clear. That might mean writing your prayer on a piece of paper and reading it.

Remember what prayer is! It is talking to the Almighty Creator of this world, of you and I and He deserves our respect and honour. If we are asking for these requests, we need to have faith that He will answer them in His timing, and possibly in ways that we've never imagined.