

8 Scriptural Prayer Practices to Engage God

By Kim Butts

Over the past several years, God has been stretching my creativity and my imagination in prayer. It has been such a refreshing season of growth for me, as I am one who, in the past, tended to get stuck in comfortable ruts. Like many of us, I grew up praying with my head bowed, eyes closed and hands folded in my lap. I was often told that this posture came about as an effective way to keep children from doing what they shouldn't do during prayer time. The practice continued into my adulthood, as I was never taught another way. Even in worship services, it is common to hear the admonition to "close your eyes and bow your heads" as we are led in prayer.

As I studied the Bible, I discovered multiple examples for utilizing our bodies and our voices in prayer. This started a rich practice of utilizing the numerous ways God's people in Scripture and throughout the ages sought and responded to Him in prayer and intercession.

I highly recommend letting the Holy Spirit speak to your heart and guide you (and/or your family, small group, etc.) into what may seem unusual or strange to you at first, but which may give your prayer lives fresh life! Following each, I will give you one or two suggestions for utilizing the practice.

1. Bowing Your Head or Body

Bowing heads or bodies shows reverence and submission to God as an act of worship— Genesis 24:26-27 (Abraham's servant bowed low in worship to God when his very specific prayer had been answered); Exodus 34:8-9 (Moses bowed his body toward the

earth and made his request before God).

Consider putting on some worship music and bowing before the Lord as an act of reverence before Him. Consider a prayer request that is close to your heart and offer it to God in this posture. See if this position brings your prayer to a different level as you consider the God on the other end of your prayer.

2. Kneel

Kneeling has always been a universal sign of submission and obedience – Daniel 6:10 (Daniel knelt three times a day, praying and giving thanks); Luke 22:39-44; Matthew 15:25; 2 Chronicles 6:12-14.

Pray for your unsaved family and friends as you kneel before the Lord. If you feel led to, spread your hands toward heaven, as King Solomon did.

3. Raise Hands

Raising or spreading out our hands as a sign of both praise and petition – (The Hebrews used their hands to show their dependence upon God and their respect for Him. Lifting up holy hands was the common prayer posture among the Jews and the early Christians. Lifting their hands symbolized an expectant attitude and trust in God—that He would fill their empty hands with His blessings) Exodus 9:29; Exodus 17:10-13; 1 Kings 8:54-55; Psalm 63:4; Psalm 141:2; 1 Timothy 2:8.

Pray for the leaders of your nation, your state, and your community. Lift up holy hands as you do. Pray that God will give them wisdom and discernment. Pray for their health and protection. Pray for their families.

4. Stand

Standing is a sign of reverence and respect – 1 Chronicles 23:28-31 (The Levites were instructed to stand every morning

and evening to praise the Lord); 2 Chronicles 20:2-9; Luke 18:9-14.

Stand alone or with others and give praise to God. Take turns thanking Him for all of the blessings He has brought into your lives. If you want, say short sentence prayers like this: "Lord, I praise You for_____."

5. Lie Prostrate

Lying prostrate before the Lord – This is a position taken in times of deep, intense, emotional prayer. There is no more humble position than this one. Deuteronomy 9:18-20, 25-27 (Moses lay prostrate before God for 40 days and nights); 1 Chronicles 21:16-17; Matthew 26:39.

Think of some deeply important needs—your own or someone else's. Perhaps someone is struggling with a life-threatening disease or some kind of life crisis. Perhaps sin has been weighing you down—this would be an appropriate position in which to confess and ask the Lord for forgiveness. Or maybe you need to ask God something very important. Come before the Lord on behalf of these requests, and lie face down before the Lord. You can pray quietly by yourself or pray out loud with others.

6. Look Up

Looking up – (Jesus looked up when He gave thanks for the loaves and fish) Mark 6:39-44.

As you give thanks for a meal, look up to heaven as you do. Spend time thanking the Lord for the way He has provided everything you need—your food, your clothing, your housing. Look toward heaven when you pray.

7. Pray Quietly

Spend some time praying quietly. – 1 Samuel 1:9-18 (Hannah prayed quietly before the Lord).

God is perfectly capable of hearing our thoughts when we pray silently. There are times when praying in this way is very appropriate. We need to learn as an individual or a family to be comfortable with silence, because out of silence the Lord often speaks very clearly.

Spend some time in silent prayer. Ask the Father to speak to your heart. If you have trouble concentrating, picture Jesus in your mind and concentrate on Him.

8. Shout

Shout your praise to the Lord – Psalm 66:1-4 (The director of music was directed to shout for joy before the Lord in this psalm.) Psalms 71:23; 95:1; 98:4-6. It is certainly appropriate to cry out to the Lord in times of desperate prayer. It is also appropriate to raise our voices in praise!

Try praising God in a loud voice, saying Acts 4:24: “Sovereign Lord . . . You made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.”

Conclusion

It is important to learn that if we seek the Lord, He will be found by us (1 Chronicles 28:9). It is also important to know that our Heavenly Father rewards those who seek Him in faith: “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). Model this passage: “Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Look to the LORD and His strength; seek His face always” (1 Chronicles 16:10-11).

–Kim Butts is the co-founder of [Harvest Prayer Ministries](#).