

**Although there are many different ways to pray, here are some of my thoughts on how I would use the gift of an hour to pray.**

Firstly, either choose a comfortable place to be or a place to go for a walk one where you feel that you might be able to connect with God, if that's not possible just switch off some distractions around you

Once you're able just to be focused why not imagine:

if your walking, with Jesus alongside you and you can just talk with him.

If your sitting in your space why not imagine him sitting by you (put on some music, grab a coffee if it helps!)

Remember His Spirit is with you.

Maybe start by just noticing what's going on in your thoughts:

You may want to lay down some things, that are just starting to fill your mind. As you notice them write them down and leave them to the side knowing that they will still be there when you come back to them at the end of the hour but also that the Lord has them in his hands.

If there is something that you need to say sorry to God for, share it with Him. Take the opportunity and know that you are a forgiven child of God because of Jesus.

Then turn your thoughts to things to thank God for; maybe somebody that you've seen that day, maybe a scripture that you've read this morning, maybe a memory that's come back.

use that opportunity to thank God to recognise his goodness, maybe even just thank him for his love for you, for your salvation, for the life he gives, for the gifts that he gives.

If you notice your breath that God gives you, thank him for your breath and as you breathe, recognise his spirit, breathe his spirit in.

You might want to then just grab a favourite verse and bring it before the Lord, if it's one of the promises of God, just pray that promise back, just like in my video series on the promises of God.

You can also spend time just reflecting and noticing, what are the thoughts that God puts into your mind.

in any conversation, someone goes first and it's OK if you want to go first sometimes, however if in going first we fill the whole hour with our words we need to remember to make space to listen, you can allow God to start the conversation.

When it comes to sharing: You can go through a list; family, friends, those that don't know Jesus.

You could let your mind go towards the schools or maybe the community, you could even remember the people you would sit next to, back at church, just pray for them. Pray for our team, our school, our volunteers and leaders.

Pray for the towns business and those on the frontline

Pray for our countries leaders. Pray for wisdom.

Pray for another area of the world you know.

Pray for someone in real need

In each of these areas just take the opportunity to talk around each of those areas of life with God just as if you were in another conversation talking listening, interceding.

The reality is though the biggest thing that we can do is to spend time in the very presence of God and so if after we've both shared things, if after we've then just paused and noticed, after we have shared and listened,

We can invite God to deeply speak, to deeply reveal himself, for we are asking the Lord to come in his presence and power. For it is only when the Lord comes in his presence and power, that lives are changed and lives are transformed.

Its only as the Lord comes that people are drawn a fresh to him.

As we ask the Lord to reveal his presence to us just as Moses did, we get to listen, rest, wrestle, he may give you a word or a picture, a specific prayer for us or the church.

In this time, we need the Lord's presence in in our community, to reveal his love and his grace, to reveal his forgiveness and his hope, to allow lament, and to bring beauty from Ashes.

These are just some of the ways that I might spend an hour. Sometimes though it's good for me to be creative, it may be that something comes to mind and you just want to draw a picture,

Sometimes the lord gives me (or reminds me of) a scripture to wrestle with in prayer. Have a look at the passage, what's the biggest word or phrase that make some impact upon you, underline it (or write it on another piece of paper), allow it to become, or challenge a part of your heart.

Prayer also flows from worship, in the hour, if it helps you to worship, put on a piece of worship music, listen to it, just engage with it, rest in it. It often helps us with the thanks, or the praise of God, sometimes it just helps us with resting in his presence.

You know it can be the same as being with a friend, a friends sits, talks and listens, and we can either remember and recall some happy times of the past, or we often drift to the future and for some of us worries or dreams, place the future into the Lord's hands, as he is the giver of hopes and dreams. Future things that can be changed things, there can be different things, things that can be remade and re come alive, things that are not necessary can be stripped away. Some things may not be changed but come into a new perspective and colour, like when black-and-white TV became colour and then 3d, each one an upgrade of the senses and the experience.

One other thought is that I often use a voice recorder on a phone to note verses, thoughts, words, ideas and pictures. That's because I find it harder to write! If you do this, don't allow yourself to be distracted by your phone!!

Enjoy the encounter, rest or challenge with the Lord! God bless, John