

Prayer Temperaments  
Sermon Preached at Primrose Methodist Church  
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**Luke 11:1-2** (NIV alternative text)

**Jesus' Teaching on Prayer**

**11** One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

**2** He said to them, "When you pray, say:

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

The disciples has seen the dance of the Trinitarian relationship in and through the life of Jesus. The love, acceptance, support and life shared between Father, Son and Holy Spirit compels them to ask, "Lord, teach us to pray..." Jesus responds with a dramatic invitation: When you pray say, "Our Father..." With those words he invites us to enter into those same loving, life sustaining relationship in which Jesus himself lives. The Father that Jesus relates to is now "Our Father..." Jesus has drawn us it the Trinity.

How do we respond and relate to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Today we look at four ways in which different temperament relate. You may find yourself in these ways and perhaps even be draw to try out some news ways of opening your heart to God.

**1) Intuition.** We will define this as an awareness of the "spiritual". Life is not flat, there are paradoxes, mysteries.

We visit 2 Kings 6:15-17 (Elisha and his servant)

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**15** When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked.

**16** "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

**17** And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

When we see life as flat we lose hope. God opens our eyes. James Houston sees our deepest intuition expressed in what the scripture call "the fear of the Lord". We live life with a deep sense of reverence for the God who is all around and even within us.

How might the intuitive person pray:

**Psalms 90 (NIV)**

**A prayer of Moses the man of God.**

**1** Lord, you have been our dwelling place  
throughout all generations.

**2** Before the mountains were born  
or you brought forth the whole world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

**2) Sensing.** Ignatius of Loyola encourages us to use all our senses in prayer and meditation. We enter the moment, what are we seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting. The sensing prayer sees also the inner beauty. What they sense become symbols that point to something greater. As we “wait on the Lord” the connections happen.

A poet has written:

“Earth’s crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God.  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;  
The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries.”

What might a sensing prayer look like?

### **Psalm 23 (NIV)**

#### **A psalm of David.**

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,

<sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul.

The shepherd has waited on the Lord. He has, through his senses, seen the sheep and the shepherd. The green pastures have rested his soul, he has tasted the water. Now they become symbols that point to God.

**3) Feeling.** Life is not a cold deal: it is not just signing on the dotted line. The Gospels are full of deep felt joy, thanksgiving, anguish and celebration. **Psalm 9:1(NIV)** “I will praise you O lord with all my heart...” The biblical phrase for this response is: “Lift up your eyes to the Lord.”

As you read **1 Timothy 1:12-17** notice how Paul’s feeling are welling up below the words that he writes until he cannot but overflow into doxology:

### **(NIV) “The Lord’s Grace to Paul**

12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. 13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

**4) Thinking.** Here we engage God in terms of seeking new truths and insights. We then respond to these insights in on-going prayer.

### **Exodus 33:12-14 (NIV)**

#### **“Moses and the Glory of the Lord**

13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you...”

How might a thinking prayer pray?

**Psalm 119:129-133**

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129 Your statutes are wonderful;  
therefore I obey them.

130 The unfolding of your words gives light;  
it gives understanding to the simple.

131 I open my mouth and pant,  
longing for your commands.

132 Turn to me and have mercy on me,  
as you always do to those who love your name.

133 Direct my footsteps according to your word;  
let no sin rule over me.

(Thanks to James M Houston: [The Prayer](#), Victor, Clorado Springs, 2007, for insights into the four types of prayer)