



# Christ Church RGV

## Learning to Pray Together

### Week 4 of 5: Prayer Journaling (May 17-May 23)

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Prayer journaling means different things to different people. For some, it involves an artsy diary that looks like it came straight out of a pin on Pinterest. Mine (Deacon John's) is a very manly brown leather journal that my cousin gifted me at Christmas.

Since there is no well-defined way of engaging in this prayer practice, you could, in theory, do it on scrap paper. But having a routine book is helpful. Not only will it help you get into the mindset of setting aside time to pray, but it's also a good means of looking back and see where you were and what God has been doing in your life.

You can find plenty of ideas (and people trying to sell you prayer journals) online. The approaches you might find tend to fall into one of two broad approaches:

- 1) **FOR THE HIGHLY ORGANIZED:** You might want to adopt what others have done concerning making lists of prayer requests, then going back later and "updating" the prayer journal. The idea is to see God at work and to be accountable for continuing to "pray through" things to which you've committed yourself to prayer. You can also use this approach with other prayer practices. For example, you can reflect on a particular verse (Lectio Divina!) or keep track of your thanksgivings and where you see God working (Examen!).
- 2) **MORE CREATIVE TYPES:** You may wish to approach prayer journaling as you would writing a diary. You also can include the other prayer practices in your journaling approach. For example, write about things that happened that seemed to be from God, verses that made you think, or your wishes for your future. If you approach your journal for prayer purposes, it's not cheating to simply raise up the book and say, "God, receive what I wrote as my prayer to you." You are literally lifting up the good and the bad, for thanksgiving and for intercession, as well any other concerns God puts on your heart.

Whatever you do, don't turn journaling into a guilt-ridden practice. Don't do it because you feel like you should, and if you decide you will but miss a day/week – don't interpret that as you having "failed at praying."

Finally, in either approach, expect that God wants to speak into your life – that if you ask Him, God will protect and sanctify your mind as you write.

## SAMPLE PRAYER JOURNAL ENTRY

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*Saturday, January 11*

*Last week, I visited Austin to get a sense of the place. [Author was discerning whether to attend law school at the University of Texas.] ██████'s and ██████'s visit left me with two signs that UT Law might be my place. Spending two days with ██████ made me think he might be a third sign!*

*God has been faithful to meet me in my joy today. A beautiful day – began with a walk to the park, where I ran 1.2 miles and walked the next 0.8. Received new BlackBerry in the mail. Dinner @ Chipotle, followed by sermon writing @ Reserva Coffee. A new song (new to me) given as gift to me by God → first, “I Vow to Thee My Country,” but I found other lyrics to the tune. So I’ve been walking around the McAllen reflecting pool listening to “O God Beyond All Praising.”*

*Visiting with ██████ gave me a new system in English teaching, too, which I’m calling the ██████ method. [Prayer journaler is a teacher – used this space to explain the new teaching strategy.]*

*I’m glad to have spent most of today with the Lord, learning from the [church] fathers about Mt. 3, receiving this new hymn as a gift, and experiencing His joy. But I ask Him now to change my heart regarding [something with which I was struggling].\* In these next seven months, may I also finish well. School. Hands on work with CCRio. RGV life in general.*

**\* You can address God directly, or write about Him in the third person. The person who wrote this entry goes back and forth between both in his prayer journal.**