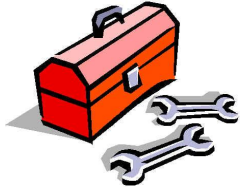


Prayer Tool Box



We are God's Building/Dwelling/Home

Jn. 14:23 If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

1 Cor. 3:9-17 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

Lk. 6:46 -49 Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.

Tools help, but it's not about the tools - It is about a Relationship

The point of prayer is to meet Jesus, the Jesus of the Gospels, and to open ourselves to be transformed by Him

Phil. 2:5 - Put on the mind of Christ.

Mk 8:33 - Think as God thinks, not as man thinks.

Mt. 11:29 - Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart.

Rm. 8:26 - We do not know how to pray as we ought, so the Holy Spirit prays within us with groans unutterable.

What do we need to do?

Remote Preparation

Time

Set a definite time so as to develop a discipline.

Start with shorter periods of prayer of at least 20 minutes.

Avoid time just before or after a meal.

Choose a time and place where you will not be interrupted.

Set a timer (music) so you don't have to be aware of time.

Environment (Place, Posture, and Ritual)

Material (Gospels, Saints, Good Spiritual Books)

It is important to begin the discipline of Spiritual Reading on a regular basis.

Prayer Form (Lectio Divina, Discursive Meditation, Centering Prayer, Rosary, etc...)

Lectio Divina

1. Lectio - What does the text say?
2. Meditatio - What does it say to me?
3. Oratio - What do I want to say to Jesus about it?
4. Contemplatio - How am I being called to change?
5. Actio - How can I be a gift to others?

Proximate Preparation

Focusing Exercise (slow down before prayer, use music, yoga, deep breathing, stretching, walking, etc...)

Be careful what you put into your mind or to what you expose your senses.

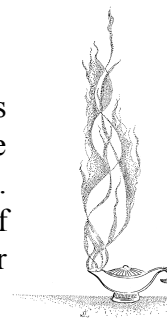
After Prayer - Resolution - Mt. 7:16 - By their fruits, you shall know them.
(Examination of Conscience)

Let My Prayer Arise like Incense

I. Desire and Discipline

Let us always desire the happy life from the Lord God and always pray for it, but for this very reason we turn our mind to the task of prayer at appointed hours, since that desire grows lukewarm, so to speak, from our involvement in other concerns and occupations. We remind ourselves through the words of prayer to focus our attention on the object of our desire: otherwise, the desire that began to grow lukewarm may grow chill altogether and may be totally extinguished unless it is repeatedly stirred into flame.

St. Augustine's Letter to Proba



Seek in reading and you will find in meditation; knock in prayer and it will be opened to you in contemplation.

St. John of the Cross

In the beginning there is struggle and a lot of work for those who come near to God. But after that, there is indescribable joy. It is just like building a fire: at first it's smoky and your eyes water, but later you get the desired results. Thus we ought to light the divine fire in ourselves with tears and effort.

Amma Syncletica

II. Interiority and Humility

Do you know, daughter, who you are and Who I AM? If you know these two things, you would be blessed. You are that which is not; I AM He Who Is. If you have This Knowledge in your soul, the enemy can never deceive you; you will escape all His snares; you will never consent to anything contrary to My Commandments; and without difficulty you will acquire every Grace, every Truth, every Light.

Dialogue of St.

Catherine of Siena

Late have I loved you, Beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved you!
Lo, you were within, But I outside, seeking there for you,
And upon the shapely things you have made I rushed headlong, I, misshapen.
You were with me, but I was not with you.
They held me back far from you; those things which would have no being were they not in you.
You called, shouted, Broke through my deafness;
You flared, Blazed, Banished my blindness;
You lavished your fragrance, I gasped, and now I pant for you,
I tasted you, and I hunger and thirst; You touched me, and I burned for your peace.

St. Augustine of Hippo

III. Prayer and the Practice of Virtue

Mt. 7:16 - By their Fruits you shall know them.

You must not build on foundations of prayer and contemplation alone, for unless you strive after the virtues and practice them, you will never grow to be more than dwarfs. . . . Anyone who fails

to go forward begins to fall back, and love, I believe, can never be content for long where it is.

St. Teresa of Avila

You may think that I am speaking about beginners, and that later on one may rest; but. . .the only repose that these souls enjoy is of an interior kind; of outward repose they get less and less. . . . We should desire and engage in prayer, not for our enjoyment, but for the sake of acquiring the strength which fits us for service. . . . Believe me, Martha and Mary must work together. . . . I will end by saying that we must not build towers without foundations, and that the Lord does not look so much at the magnitude of anything we do as at the love with which we do it. If we accomplish what we can, His Majesty will see to it that we become able to do more each day (Seventh Mansions, chap. 4). *St. Teresa of Avila*

IV. Distractions and Discouragement

1. Do not analyze them or chase them away like pesky flies.
2. Go back to reading the text to re-engage the mind and imagination.
3. Keep pen and paper nearby during prayer just in case an obligation or duty keeps disturbing you.
4. At times a distraction is not a distraction at all. Sometimes our memory haunts us with past conversations, arguments, broken or strained relationships or hurts. The Spirit may be working here, extracting areas of darkness in us like decayed teeth, holding them up for us to see, acknowledge and reconcile or repair with the help of God’s grace. The same can be true of fears and worries in the present and for the future. Whatever preoccupies us needs to be brought to the Lord.

In the tensions and trials of our prayer life, when God seems to be remote and silent, perseverance in His presence is itself our prayer (Constitutions of the Sisters of Notre Dame)

The Stages of Prayer

	St. Teresa of Avila	St. Catherine of Siena	St. Thomas Aquinas	Prayer Form	Description
1	Purgative Way	The Feet of Christ	Beginner	Vocal Prayer/Rote Prayers - Meditation	Stripping away whatever is not Christ. The Beginner is still torn with attachment to the world. Conversion.
2	Illuminative Way	The Heart of Christ	Proficient	Meditation/Mental Prayer – Recollection	We are walking with Christ, learning from Him and growing spiritually. Loving conversation with God which may result in loving presence.
3	Unitive Way	The Mouth of Christ	Perfect	Contemplation	Mystical Union with Christ. We have put on the mind of Christ. No thinking, just loving.

					Suspension of the Faculties (spiritual and physical progressively).
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