



## In a word, Prayer is ...

Many have tried to sum up in a short phrase what prayer is. Here are some of their “definitions”. Maybe one will speak to you; another may invite to think about prayer in a new way.

Prayer is...

- ◆ the raising up of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God. (*St. John Damascene*)
- ◆ simply union with God. (*St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars*)
- ◆ a conversation with a friend; and that includes knowing how to be quiet and listen. (*St. Ignatius of Loyola*)
- ◆ a conversation with God. (*St. Gregory of Nyssa*)
- ◆ but the expression of desire. (*St. Thomas Aquinas*)
- ◆ a heart-to-heart talk, in which the soul flows into God and God flows into the soul, in order to transform it into himself. (*Elizabeth of the Trinity*)
- ◆ not a matter of a lot of thinking; it’s a lot of loving. (*St. Teresa of Avila*)
- ◆ an aspiration of the heart, a humble glance towards heaven, a cry of gratitude and of love whether it be in a time of trial or of joy. (*St. Thérèse of Lisieux*)
- ◆ awakening to God’s presence within. (*James Borst*)
- ◆ full attentiveness. (*Simone Weil*)
- ◆ is a way of life... an attitude of living and breathing... an awareness of God in all our experiences, good and bad. (*Frank Topping*)
- ◆ a matter of opening yourself to God, just as you open yourself to the fire, or to the sun or to the light. (*Louis Evely*)
- ◆ God’s work of longing and love in you, God’s breathing of the Spirit in you, to make you want union with what he wants. (*Maria Boulding*)
- ◆ is freedom and affirmation growing out of nothingness into love.... the flowering of our inmost freedom in response to the Word of God. (*Thomas Merton*)
- ◆ not only a gift but an art. (*Carlo Cardinal Martini*)