

## Tool 6



### Praying Aloud in Public Worship

If this is the first time you have written your own prayer and offered it in public worship, believe it or not, this is the easy part! Here are some pointers to ensure your comfort in the delivery of your prayers.

1. Arrive at church in good time and greet your friends. After all, these are the people who will be praying with you, using your words.
2. When the time comes, walk confidently to the lectern. Adjust the microphone so it points directly to your mouth. Pause. Take a good, deep breath. Count silently to three. Say "Let us pray." Then begin.
3. Nervousness will probably try to make you race through the prayer. Try to slow down. Remember to breathe in at each pause, filling your lungs to the very bottom so you will have lots of wind.
4. Concentrate on saying each of the consonants clearly and the vowels will take care of themselves. As much as possible, try to push the air out from the bottom of your lungs using the large diaphragm muscle.
5. Remember to put a little extra effort into the words at the end of the sentence to counteract the natural tendency to let our voice trail away.
6. If you are saying the Lord's Prayer, be sure to have a copy with you. Many a minister has suddenly forgotten the words!
7. At some point in the prayer, look up. Do you see those friends and neighbours who are praying with you? And those whom you barely know? And the minister and the ruling elders? They are supporting you and lifting you up to an unseen throne. But there are more you cannot see. Their skins are different colours, and their voices are raised in every human language from every corner of this globe, but they too are praying with you. You cannot see them, but they are there.

And if our creeds are correct, there are more still praying with you. For we believe the grave cannot have the power to still the voice of prayer. A "great cloud of witnesses" is praying with us. You cannot see them, but they too are there. And still there is one other praying with you. Perhaps you recognize him. If we could see with eyes of flesh, we would know that his hands and his feet bear the marks of Roman nails. He is praying too. And he takes up all our prayers, weak and inadequate though they are, and joins them with his own. How then can our prayers fail!

Any questions or comments? Please contact the Elders' Institute for information.

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