

How Did Jesus Pray?
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Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat, and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray. Mark 6:45-46

We all know (I hope you know!) that we can pray anywhere, at any time, about anything. God is always right there and happy to hear from us. But there are certain times when we really need to do as Jesus did: get away from people and find some quiet and solitude. In fact, we know that at this point in his ministry, Jesus had some crucial things to talk with God about.

Herod was suspicious of Jesus and hated him; the orthodox Jewish leaders also hated and feared him, and were making more and more noise about it. There was a nationalistic movement going on to make Jesus the warrior Messiah the Jews had been waiting for: the one who would overthrow the oppressive Roman government and set the Jewish people free. And, Jesus' cousin, God's messenger John the Baptist had been executed. Jesus was misunderstood and in danger every day of his life. There's more than enough there to drive any of us to seek God.

What I want is more information! How did Jesus pray? Did he bow his head and fold his hands? Did he close his eyes and simply lift his head and hands to God in faith and submission? Did he use words, and verbally discuss his situation with God and maybe even hear a verbal reply from God, or a nudge, or a "knowing"? Did he just sit quietly, eyes open, aware of God's presence around him and within him? Did he offer praise and thanksgiving, maybe even use a format similar to the one we call The Lord's Prayer? Occasionally, were there tears ... frustration ... exhaustion ... even anger?

Well, the answer is "yes." I feel absolutely sure Jesus prayed in all those different ways, and more, during his time on earth as a man. And we can, too. We don't have to use King James language, or be on our best behavior, or say or do anything that isn't real and honest. In fact, EVERY time we pray, however our prayer looks and sounds, the basic requirement is honesty and openness. I often say, "Just because you're praying, it's no time to get religious!" The idea is to be yourself, however that looks, because YOU are the person God knows and loves, and if you can be completely real with God, that means you're beginning to trust him.

Because of Jesus, YOU are also God's child, and he likes to hear from you frequently – while you're on the go, and also when you slow down and settle in with him. What you say or how you say it isn't nearly as important as you being real and honest and open with God. Trust him with your own truth! He can take it, and he loves you no matter what.