

## Prayer and the Power of Ritual



### **Top Quotes: Prayer and the Power of Ritual** (For the full quotes, and their source, see below)

1. "I say to you, ask and it will be given you; search and you will find." (*Jesus*)
2. Prayer is the key to the vitality of your life in Christ. (*Pope John-Paul II*)
3. "Without prayer, your faith and love will die" (*Pope John-Paul II*)
4. "The habit of prayer, the ritual, the simple fidelity to the act, showing up to do it irrespective of feelings and mood, can sustain prayer for a lifetime and reign in the roaming of the head and heart." (*Fr Ron Rolheiser*)
5. "Something really important... something that is essential to your Christian lives: It is prayer. Prayer is so important that Jesus himself tell us: "Pray constantly." He wants us to pray for light and strength." (*Pope John-Paul II*)
6. "What matters most is that you develop your personal relationship with God. That relationship is expressed in prayer." (*Pope Benedict XVI*)
7. "We must first listen, then respond.... Do you leave space to hear God's whisper, calling you forth into goodness? Friends, do not be afraid of silence or stillness, listen to God." (*Pope Benedict XVI*)
8. "If we don't imitate Jesus in (prayer), we will soon enough imitate the world in its restless, destructive envy." (*Fr Ron Rolheiser*)
9. "When we say "I love you" and when we do formal prayer at those times when our feelings seem to belie our words, we aren't being hypocritical or simply going through the motions, we're actually expressing some deeper truths." (*Fr Ron Rolheiser*)

10. “You must make time each day to rest in the Lord, to pray. To pray is to rest in the Lord. But you may say to me: ... there is so much work to do! ... This may be true, but if we do not pray, we will not know the most important thing of all: God’s will for us. And for all our activity, our busy-ness, without prayer we will accomplish very little.” (*Pope Francis*)

### **Full Quotes and Source of Quotes: Prayer and the Power of Ritual**

“So I say to you, ask and it will be given you; search and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.” — *Jesus (Luke 11:9)*

“One of the most striking things about Jesus was his habit of prayer. In the midst of an active public ministry, we find him going away by himself to be alone in silence and communion with his Father in heaven....

If you really wish to follow Christ, if you want your love for him to grow and last, then you must be faithful to prayer. It is the key to the vitality of your life in Christ. Without prayer, your faith and love will die. If you are constant in daily prayer and in the Sunday celebration of Mass, your love for Jesus will increase. And your heart will know deep joy and peace, such as the world could never give....

when we find life difficult, when we face a painful decision or when we struggle with temptation. At times like these, Jesus prayed with all the greater intensity. We must do the same! When it is difficult therefore to pray, the most important thing is not to stop praying, not to give up the effort.”

— *Pope John-Paul II in sections 9 and 10 of his [great speech to the young people of America](#) 12 September 1987 in New Orleans*

“Anyone who prays only when she can effectively bring along her heart and soul will not sustain prayer for long. But the habit of prayer, the ritual, the simple fidelity to the act, showing up to do it irrespective of feelings and mood, can sustain prayer for a lifetime and reign in the roaming of the head and heart.”  
— *Fr Ron Rolheiser*

“Before I go away, there is something really important that I wish to emphasise... something that is essential to your Christian lives. It is prayer. Prayer is so important that Jesus himself tell us: “Pray constantly” (Lk 21:36). He wants us to pray for light and strength. He wants us to pray to his Father, as he himself did. The Gospel tells us that Jesus prayed all night before choosing his Apostles (cf Lk 6:12). And later on, in his Passion, at the height of his suffering, Christ “prayed more earnestly” (Lk 22:44).” — *Pope John Paul II (“To the Young People of England and Wales”), 2nd June 1982, at Ninian Park, Cardiff, as quoted on page 87 of “The Pope in Britain: Collected Homilies and Speeches”, St Paul Publications, 1982*

“What matters most is that you develop your personal relationship with God.

That relationship is expressed in prayer. God by his very nature speaks, hears, and replies.

Indeed, Saint Paul reminds us: we can and should “pray constantly” (*1 Thess 5:17*). Far from turning in on ourselves or withdrawing from the ups and downs of life, by praying we turn towards God and through him to each other, including the marginalized and those following ways other than God’s path (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 33). As the saints teach us so vividly, prayer becomes hope in action. Christ was their constant companion, with whom they conversed at every step of their journey for others.

There is another aspect of prayer which we need to remember: silent contemplation. Saint John, for example, tells us that to embrace God's revelation we must first listen, then respond by proclaiming what we have heard and seen (cf. *1 Jn* :2-3; *Dei Verbum*, 1). Have we perhaps lost something of the art of listening? Do you leave space to hear God's whisper, calling you forth into goodness? Friends, do not be afraid of silence or stillness, listen to God, adore him in the Eucharist. Let his word shape your journey as an unfolding of holiness....

Friends, again I ask you, what about today? What are you seeking? What is God whispering to you?"

— *Pope Benedict XVI, talk to young people in Yonkers, New York, USA, April 19 2008*

"In my experience, the extraordinary people that I have known and admired all have had the same secret, they prayed privately. Gil Bailie puts it well in '*Violence Unveiled*.' Commenting on Jesus' unique capacity to rise above the forces that were drowning everyone else, he says: Jesus broke the snares of satan, not intellectually, but by being God-centred, he "turned his eyes towards heaven." This is what made him immune to the contagion of desire. If we don't imitate Jesus in this, we will soon enough imitate the world in its restless, destructive envy." —*Fr Ron Rolheiser*

"Today we no longer understand the value and power of ritual. This is more than an individual failing. It's the cultural air we breathe. In the words of Robert L. Moore, we've gone "ritually tone-deaf"....

It's not a question of going through the motions on days when the feelings aren't there. Rather it's going through the ritual as an incantation, as an honoring of our relationship to God, and as an act of faith in prayer.

If we only said "I love you" when we actually felt that emotion and if we only prayed when we actually felt like it, we wouldn't express love or pray very often. When we say "I love you" and when we do formal prayer at those times when our feelings seem to belie our words, we aren't being hypocritical or simply going through the motions, we're actually expressing some deeper truths."

—*Fr Ronald Rolheiser writing one of his weekly columns for [his website](#) and for 65 Catholic newspapers worldwide, '*The Value and Power of Ritual*', July 6 2015*

"You must make time each day to rest in the Lord, to pray. To pray is to rest in the Lord. But you may say to me: Holy Father, I know that; I want to pray, but there is so much work to do! I must care for my children; I have chores in the home; I am too tired even to sleep well. I know.

This may be true, but if we do not pray, we will not know the most important thing of all: God's will for us. And for all our activity, our busy-ness, without prayer we will accomplish very little."

—*Pope Francis [talking to families](#) in the Philippines, 16th January 2015 (a Rome Reports [video of the highlights of his talk and tips](#) is here)*