



Leading Intercessions

Leading others in prayer is a vital ministry of the Church. Jesus teaches us the importance of praying *together*. This togetherness is not just about being in the same place at the same time – it's about a harmony of intention. There is an important difference between individual, private prayer and public, corporate prayer.

Pray! Be a praying person. The discipline of daily prayer is what equips you to lead others in prayer. When preparing prayers for an act of public worship, prepare prayerfully and pray about your preparations. There is another 10TT leaflet to help with this.

1

Think about the context. Look at the Bible readings for the service. Are there themes you can use in the prayers? Speak to the preacher if you can. Read the news. Check any intercessions list. Aim for four or five petitions and keep them brief.

2

Where do the intercessions sit in the service? An act of public worship takes us on a journey. How will these prayers accompany us on that journey?

3

Don't plan the Holy Spirit out of things! Be as open to inspiration as your confidence allows. At first, this will be a scary, but it will get easier.

4

Include published prayers if that helps you. It isn't necessary to 'make up' all the words yourself. Prayers with a lot of miles on the clock have proven their value.

5

Speak in your own voice. Prayer is a reverential and serious activity, but it should never be, or feel, artificial. We bring our real selves to God in prayer.

8

Be at church in good time. Make sure you know where you will be standing and understand how to operate any technology (e.g. microphone) that you will be using.

9

Don't betray confidences. Public prayer is not a forum for gossip. God knows the details, and our prayers are not made more effective by spelling them out.

10

Announce any response you want people to make. "The response to 'Lord, in your mercy' is 'Hear our prayer'." Then rehearse it immediately: "Lord, in your mercy..."

If you make up your own response, remember to keep it short enough to be easily memorised.

6

As you are praying, try to let your preparation and your nerves fall away. Focus on God, who not only invites us, but commands us, to pray (Phil 4). Take your time and don't be afraid of silence. Address your prayers to God, not to the congregation.

7

Going Deeper

Learning to pray, and to lead others in prayer, is a lifelong journey that draws us deeper into the mystery of God. No single guide will be able to serve you well along that whole journey. Some suggestions about how to go deeper follow. Not all will suit everyone. Find out what helps you to pray, and use it to help others to pray.

Websites: Church of England Guidance on leading intercessions can be found at: www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/leading-prayer-through-intercessions

There is an interesting discussion at: www.layanglicana.org/anglicapaedia/advice-on-leading-intercessions.php

From another part of the Anglican Communion, there are good ideas (with a 'Top 10 Tips' of its very own) at: www.anglicanfocus.org.au/2021/10/05/how-to-write-prayers-of-intercession/

Watch: A Roman Catholic Lector discusses the 'Prayers of the Faithful': www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJaGu7n5DCA

An Anglican perspective is discussed: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijRugi1XVPo

Print Resources: There are many, many books and publications about prayer. These are just a small sample of those aimed specifically at leading prayers of intercession in public worship.

Shaping the Prayers of the People: the Art of Intercession, Samuel Wells
Leading Common Worship Intercessions: A Simple Guide, Doug Chaplin
Leading Intercessions: Creative Ideas for Public and Private Prayer, John Pritchard

To speak to someone about leading intercessions, contact your local Church Leader or the College of St Hugh: collegeofsthugh@lincoln.anglican.org

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