

Using Prayer Cards to Help You to Love Prayer

By J.

Very occasionally God might answer prayer instantaneously, but some of the most rewarding intercessory prayer follows a process of bringing a need before God over a long period of time. In this article I would love to share with you how prayer cards can help you pray long term prayers, without getting bored or giving up.

Over time...

My favourite part about prayer cards is that you can see the Holy Spirit working powerfully over a long time.

For example, my dad surprised me recently by telling me he was reading the Bible and was up to Exodus in the Old Testament already. Afterwards, I was praying through my prayer cards and remembered that a year ago I had added to my dad's prayer card: "I pray that my father would read the Bible with a humble heart." God didn't answer the prayer immediately and over time I had put this prayer to the back of my mind, but now I was very aware that God had not forgotten! Did God need me to keep praying this prayer all year for him to answer it? No, Jesus says, [Matthew 6:7](#), "*And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.*" God didn't need me to ask more than once, but *I* needed to be reminded of the prayer, so that I could praise God when he answers them in his timing.

The other exciting way that the Holy Spirit uses prayer cards is that over time he shapes our prayers to conform more and more with God's will. John writes, [1 John 5:14-15](#), "*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.*" As the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, our selfish will is transformed into praying according to God's will. Often as I'm praying back over an old prayer card, it's mightily encouraging to realise that I've grown in my spiritual maturity, and I can update the card according to what I've been learning about God's good and perfect will in the Bible.

I highly recommend the [PrayerMate](#) app as a way of organising prayer cards. Most of my advice below can work with a stack of memo cards, but I love that PrayerMate automatically randomises and selects cards for prayer, as well as giving you access to prayer feeds written by other people when you need some extra inspiration. If you are a person who carries your smartphone with you everywhere, this app is a great way to pray and note down prayer points as you go about your day.

Advice for creating prayer cards

Don't overwhelm yourself, start with five or six cards with single sentence prayer requests. The great thing about prayer cards is that you can update cards and add new cards whenever you like. But here are some helpful categories you might consider making cards for: your personal spiritual growth, family, Christians, non-Christians, world mission.

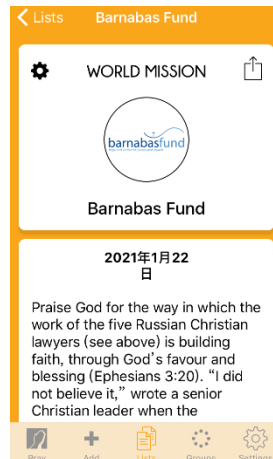
As you get into a prayer habit I'm sure you'll develop your own style, but I have generally found it helpful to write prayers in first person, so that when I am not feeling particularly creative, I have words that I have previously put thought into that can be prayed verbatim, and often guide my heart to the right prayerful attitude. Here are some example cards from my own collection:



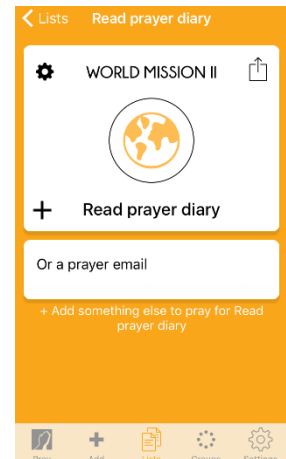
A prayer card that started as a single sentence, but later a bible reference was added.



A prayer card made by adding a prayer pack available on PrayerMate.



A prayer feed from Barnabas Fund.



A prayer card reminding me to pick a prayer from a prayer diary or check for prayer emails sent by missionaries.

Advice for praying your cards

The great thing about prayer cards is that you can have lots of cards stored up, but only pray for a handful each day. I have found this immensely helpful for keeping interest and variety in my intercession. PrayerMate allows you to select how many cards you pray each session.

That said, you still need to do the hard work to develop a regular prayer habit. Picking the same place and time each day to pray is a good idea. Linking your prayer habit with something else that is already part of your routine works well, perhaps before breakfast or during your commute. Be realistic about how many cards you can pray each day. Consistency is more important than quantity.

Praying 10 cards a day is realistic for me. I only had a handful of cards to start with but over time I have built up 251 cards.

