



Suggestions for Prayer Partners

Sharing Two Way Prayer writings with a friend brings added depth and dimension to this work. Sharing can be done face to face or, perhaps even more effectively and consistently, over the phone.

The sharing can be part of a 12-Step sponsoring relationship that's mutually enhanced when both parties actively engage in the practice. The following suggestions may be helpful in forming and sustaining an effective and mutually beneficial prayer partnership.

- Commit to a set day and time. Most prayer partners connect weekly with calls lasting 30 minutes to one hour. If a call is scheduled for 7AM on a particular day of the week, be prompt in placing the call, as the other person should be waiting at the other end of the line. This sharing time is an important commitment and, while cancelling a call may sometimes be unavoidable, try not to let anything interrupt it if possible.
- Stay focused on sharing your writings. Most calls begin with a few minutes of general sharing of the week's events but then move fairly quickly to each person sharing their week's writings. This is neither a social nor a sponsor-type call. It is a time to share writings. If both parties are serious about their work, each should have six to seven days of Two Way Prayer writings recorded in their journals. If a person is experiencing a serious problem in life, that person should be asking God for guidance and not asking the partner to solve it or even to give advice. We are there to listen and not to fix.
- As a general rule, the less experienced person shares their writings first. This allows them more time if it is needed; but time should be afforded both partners as the newcomer benefits as much from listening to the writings of the more seasoned practitioner as from sharing. Fifty-fifty is the goal, seventy-thirty should be the minimum.
- Cross talk is allowed. After a person shares the writings from each day the listener may want to share or comment briefly. Here the intent is not to analyze what the other person has written but to encourage, help to understand it, or, better still, to share briefly what the writing might mean for them. Cross talk is definitely allowed during the sharing, but the listener must be careful not to take the focus away from the person sharing his or her own writings.
- Focus on the guidance. Some people may have developed effective, alternative practices of journaling or meditating over the years and they may want to continue these practices as part of their morning quiet time.
- This is perfectly fine. Fifteen to twenty minutes of silent Centering Prayer or a similar amount of time devoted to reflective journal writing can easily precede the 5 to 10 minutes or so set aside for Two Way Prayer. None of that other work, however, should be part of the sharing. Keep the focus on the guidance each partner has received.

- Commit to partnering for a set period of time. Most people find it helpful to commit to “trying on” their prayer partnership arrangements. Six weeks to three months is a reasonable amount of time to see if partners are compatible and likely to be of genuine help to one another. This work should never be just a one-way street. Each partner should be benefitting from the work of the other for an effective and longer-term relationship to develop and sustain itself over time. If one partner often comes to the call with few written entries or frequently cancels the regularly scheduled session, the partnership is likely to be ineffective. Don’t be afraid to terminate it.

There will come a time when it is best for partners to move on from the prayer partnership arrangement. This should not be seen as “abandoning” the other person. After doing this work for several months or even for a year or more, it is expected that the new person should be ready to begin leading others through the work as well. He or she should take on the role of teacher or else a dependency will develop on the prayer partner instead of on God where it rightly belongs.

Online Conference Calls

Some people have found that moving to a weekly zoom call that can include two or more of the individuals they have previously partnered with can be an effective way of staying in contact while also allowing them to carry this work to others in need. It’s also a great way to conduct a Two Way Prayer meeting open to others just beginning the practice.

A Final Note from Fr. Bill

Please remember these guidelines are suggestions only. There really are no hard and fast rules for prayer partnering or for conducting meetings. While Two Way Prayer is primarily private writings between you and your Higher Power, sharing your guidance with others can often be helpful.