

How to Pray in Public

by John Franklin

Standing before God and a congregation to voice the heart desires of the people is an awesome responsibility; here are nine tips to help you.

Five Actions to Avoid in When You Pray in Public

1. **Praying to people rather than God** – Public prayer carries the pressure of performance.
How will I sound? Will it be good? What will others think?
Overcome this pressure by focusing on the God who is listening.
2. **Using prayer to instruct others** – You may be tempted to communicate a point to others by explaining things to God.
3. **Using pet phrases** – Phrases such as “lead, guide, and direct, or “bless the gift and the giver” are used so often that they have lost meaning for the one praying or to the congregation.
4. **Droning on** – Jesus prayed succinct public prayers and offered the following command, “When you pray, don’t babble like the idolaters, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words.” Matt 6:7 (HCSB)
5. **Praying in an inaudible voice** – In public prayer, the public needs to hear your words so they can agree in their heart. If you are asked to pray, stand, face the congregation, and project your voice.

Four Actions to Include in Your Public Prayer

1. **Begin your prayer with praise or thanksgiving** – God designed prayer to work out of a love relationship, therefore prayer needs to include the language of love. Honor God by beginning your public prayer by acknowledging the giver more than the gift and the doer more than the deed.
2. **Pray for others by name** – Most biblical commands concerning intercession encourage Christians to pray for one another. I have observed a unique atmosphere of love in congregations where people pray publicly for one another by name.
3. **Pray specifically** – A relationship with God is practical and relevant. Most biblical petitions were for specific needs specific to the moment. While generic prayers have a place, nothing electrifies a congregation like seeing a specific answer to a specific prayer concern.
4. **Pray about what has transpired or will transpire in the service** – If you are praying at the beginning of the service, ask God to bless your pastor and worship leaders by name. If you are closing the service, thank God for at least one thing you specifically heard from Him.

May God bless you and your congregation next time you lead them in prayer.

John Franklin is pastor of Woodmont Bible Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and has served as Prayer Specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources. He is the author of *And the Place Was Shaken: How to Lead a Powerful Prayer Meeting* and *A House of Prayer: Prayer Ministries in Your Church*, available at www.lifeway.com/shopping

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