

trypraying.

A little book for prisoners

# Is this the time?

Do you want to change the way  
you think, act and feel?



## Yes?

Why not try praying this week and  
see what happens in your life?



# Start the journey.

Prayer is the first step on a journey.  
A journey that will take you to new places.  
A place where you are free to start again.



HOW SHOULD I PRAY?

# Prayer isn't tricky.

You don't need special words.

You don't need to be in church.

You don't need to be religious.

You can pray anywhere.

You can talk to God about anything.



## TRY PRAYING

- You can pray anywhere but it can help to find a place that's quiet.
- Try to believe God is there with you, even if it feels strange.
- You can use your own words or try this prayer:



**God,  
if you're there, and I'm not sure you are,  
but if you are, I want to know you.  
I don't want to fool myself.  
I really want to know you.  
Please make yourself known to me.**

## IS GOD REALLY THERE?

His dad had told him not to do it - but the little boy had seen big boys jumping off the climbing net, and he wanted a go too. So he went for it: 'I'm Spiderman!'

Falling was fun - but landing and breaking his arm was not!

Deep inside of us, there's a feeling that tells us when something is right or wrong. Some of this comes from what we were taught as kids.

But not everyone had a good upbringing - and they still get a feeling when something is right or wrong.

These feelings are called your conscience. We have them because God put them there. Often we try to shut them out - sometimes with drink and drugs. But your conscience is a sign you were made by God.

You're one of his children, he cares about you, and you can reach out to him at any time.





# SENTENCED TO LIFE.

**When Shiloh was sentenced to life in prison,**  
she wanted to commit suicide.

“After I got the life sentence, I thought about ending my life. How could my children and I survive being separated? But I felt God reminding me that I hadn’t been created to give up. I prayed for strength to accept the situation.

For a long time, all I could pray was: ‘I trust you Lord.’ I didn’t always believe what I was praying. But that simple prayer slowly began to change me. I started to believe that God was good, He hadn’t abandoned me, and He still had a plan for my life.

It’s been over 6 years now, and my children are thriving, because God is a perfect parent, and He has protected, loved and provided for them. Now prayer is my lifeline connection to my Creator, God the Father. So my advice? Pray anyway. The more simple, and the more it comes from your heart, the better. Just pray!”

- Shiloh, Oklahoma.

# ABANDONED.

A long time ago, a serious criminal offender was sentenced to death. He was nailed to a cross – abandoned by society and his family. A slow and painful way to die.

On another cross beside him, hanging there in agony, was Jesus.

Jesus had been in court that morning to be sentenced – for a crime he didn't commit. The sentence he got was death.

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Read about Jesus' court case in a Bible: in Luke, chapter 23.



# NOT FORGOTTEN.

A sunset scene with three crosses on a hill in the foreground. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and scattered clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm glow. The crosses are silhouetted against the bright sky.

Jesus was treated like dirt, but the man on the cross beside him knew that Jesus was someone special. The man asked Jesus to remember him when he got to heaven.

Jesus made a promise to the man:  
'Today you will be with me in  
paradise' (meaning heaven).

**When we reach out to God, God comes to us – no matter what we've said or done.**

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**Next:** Read about Clint's decision to take his own life.

# SAVED FROM SUICIDE.

**After becoming hooked on drugs,** Clint Holmes was forced by a gang to help import a 10-ton consignment of cannabis. But police were tipped off about the plan.

Clint spent 13 months on remand and saw terrible violence in prison. He was put on suicide watch. One inmate tried to speak to Clint “about hope in God,” but Clint just swore at him. Clint asked to be put in solitary confinement to escape the violence.

“I hated myself,” Clint recalls. “I just sat there in total darkness and – with a razor blade – planned to end it all. I just prayed, ‘Oh God...’ and though my eyes were shut, I suddenly felt the cell fill with intense light.

I felt pure love all over me. I knew straight away it was Jesus . I knew it was Him.” In his new love for Jesus, Clint read the Bible, writing down verses so he could remember them. Everyone noticed the big change in his life.

Clint’s faith in Christ has taken him far, even to India, and he has worked with Street Pastors and the elderly.



# There's a story about a door in the Bible.

## PRAYER OPENS A DOOR.

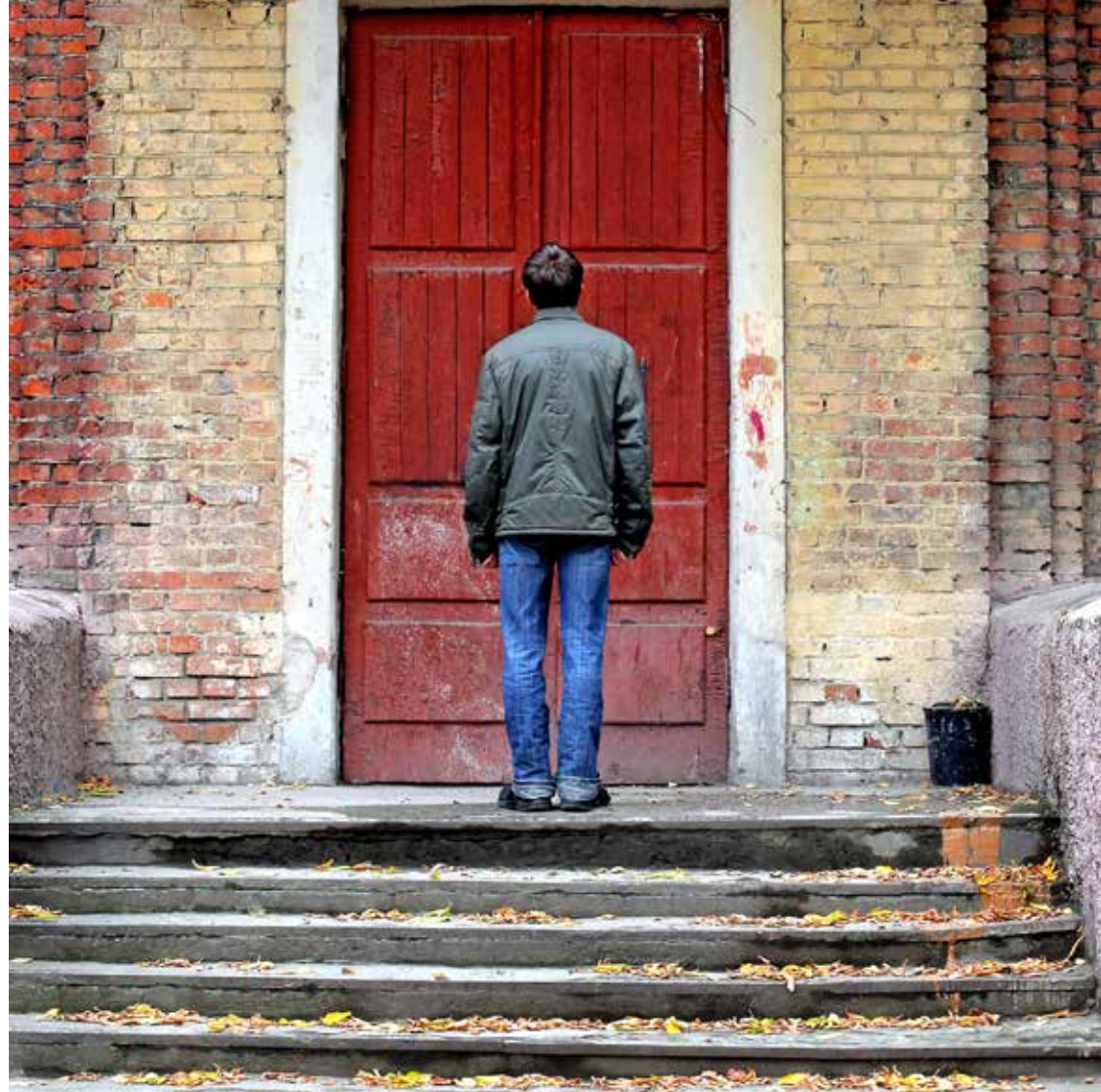
Someone is standing outside the door and he wants to come in. He knocks and knocks but no-one answers.

The man in the story is Jesus.

He won't force his way in - he gives you the choice.  
When you pray, it's like you're opening a door.

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“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” (The Bible) Revelation 3 verse 20.



# Will you unlock the door in your heart today?

## TRY PRAYING:

Find a place to pray. Take a deep breath  
and try to settle your mind.

Pray about unlocking your heart and what might stop  
you from letting Jesus in. Ask God to help you.



God, it feels a bit strange talking to you,  
but I'm giving it a go. Maybe you are closer  
than I think. Please take away anything  
that stops me from letting you in.

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**NEXT:** Read about one of the most  
dangerous men in the jail.



## DANGER MAN

**Shane Taylor was one of the most dangerous prisoners in Britain's jails.** Jailed at 19 for attempted murder, he was often held in solitary confinement.

Shane ended up attending an Alpha Course. After the session, the chaplain prayed for him and then asked Shane to pray.

Shane says, "I prayed - 'Jesus Christ, I know you died on a cross for me. Please, I don't like who I am, please forgive me.' I started to feel this bubbly feeling slowly coming up my body - through my legs, my chest. I could feel tears coming into my eyes. Here I was, a hard man in prison - I didn't want to cry. I cried for about five minutes and I could feel a weight being lifted off me.

In that split second I knew it was real. I knew God existed, I knew Jesus had touched me and that I was going to live for him forever. Before I was a man of pure hate and anger. Jesus has showed me how to love and how to forgive."



Jesus can  
set you free  
from anger,  
bitterness, pain  
and addiction.

## PRAYER CAN SET YOU FREE.

If you let God in – the light of his love shines into the darkest corners of your life.

You can tell God everything you've done, and ask his forgiveness. It might not be easy, but it will change you.

The Bible says that everyone has done wrong. There is not a single person, criminal or saint, who can say they are innocent. Everyone has hurt someone or caused some kind of damage. We all need forgiveness.

The good news is God sent someone else to take your place and take the blame - his own son Jesus.

Jesus was executed as a criminal. He took the punishment on himself so that we could be forgiven by God.

Jesus asks you to turn your back on your old life. To believe that you can have a new life with Him. A new life that will not end in death.





If we accept God's forgiveness, we can make a new start...and God will help us to forgive others too.

**God I'm sorry for things that have spoiled my life. It must have hurt you as well as others. Please forgive me and help me to forgive myself. I ask that you come into my life right now through your Spirit and make me the kind of person you want me to be.**





# CHANGED FOREVER.

**John Lawson had done it all** – from planning robberies and running a brothel, to kidnap and extortion. He was even planning a murder, until his heart was changed. God finally caught up with John while he was in prison.

John did not want to go to chapel until he found out the meetings had snacks. “I thought Christians were weak, pathetic people – I planned to fill my pockets as soon as they were praying with their eyes closed.”

But that night John’s hard shell finally cracked. He couldn’t hide the tears as the words of the songs spoke to his heart.

Back in his cell, he asked Jesus to forgive him for all that he’d done wrong. Images of the terrible things he’d done, rolled through his mind, but then he felt peace.

He experienced God’s presence in his prison cell and knew he was changed forever; “God has amazing plans for all our lives and I thank him every day for saving me.”



JESUS SAID;

“The Spirit  
sent me to  
proclaim  
freedom for  
the prisoners.”

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Bible: in Luke 4:18.



# A CHANGED MAN

**Mo Timbo grew up in a rough city neighbourhood.**

From the age of 14 he was dealing drugs and a gang-member, stabbing and being stabbed. Then one day he sold drugs to an undercover officer. As he sat in the police cell, he cried out to Jesus to help him to change.

When he was released, he stopped dealing - married his girlfriend, and started going to church. A year later he was sentenced for his previous crimes.

Going to prison as a Christian was a challenging experience:

‘Prison is tough, but Jesus changed my attitude. Instead of being depressed, I had lots to be thankful for. I was inside on a mission - to tell others about Jesus.’

After he left prison, life wasn’t easy. ‘I’d been a prisoner, and now I was meant to be a good husband. It was tough-going. But because I had Jesus and the church I was able to become a better man for my wife and my little boy.’

## MY THANK YOU LIST

It's easy to think about the bad stuff all the time, but there are good things too - things that are important to you.

Write down a few things to Thank God for.

# Thank you for...

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“Life in prison started to get better when I thanked God every day - I started to have an attitude of gratitude.”

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Ex-Prisoner, HMP Edinburgh.



# YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Maybe you feel like it's impossible to be thankful.

You are lonely, in pain and hurting.

Maybe it seems like there is no way out.

In the Bible, a man called David felt like that.

But God reminded him that he wasn't alone.

David wrote a song about it.

The song talks about the most scary of all places -  
'the valley of the shadow of death'.

It's a place where it feels like death and darkness rule,  
and there is no way out. David's song reminds us,  
that even in the darkest places - God is with you.

God is walking beside you and protecting you.

He doesn't want you to stay in a dark valley.

He wants you to keep walking and to get out of there,  
because you are His child and He loves you.

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Bible: Read David's song about God's love in Psalm 23.



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### TRY PRAYING ON YOUR OWN.

You can pray on your own at any time.  
God's Spirit is with you.

Say your own prayers, or you could use a book of prayers.



2

### TRY PRAYING WITH OTHERS.

You can meet to pray with one or two others.



3

### TRY PRAYING IN CHURCH.

You can meet in chapel to pray.



ANY TIME, ANY PLACE, ANY THING

You can pray any time, in any place, about anything.

MY BIG ISSUE

“I’m worried about...”

Do you have a big problem in your life right now? This is something that you really want God to do something about.

Maybe there is someone you’re worried about?

Why not pray for them. God is good and often comes to help us when we reach out to him.

Write down your big issue here.

My Big Issue...

Pray about your problem. You can pray by adding your own words into this prayer:

God,

I’m really worried about  
My family/health/relationship/

Please help me/them to

Amen.

# What if my prayers aren't answered?

God answers our prayers – but not always in the way we expect or want.

If our prayer hasn't been answered,  
we should keep on praying,  
and not give up hope.

But sometimes it seems like God is silent. At times like this, it might help to remember that Jesus suffered a lot when he was alive. He is close beside you even in the worst times of your life.

Talk to the chaplain about it if you can.









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[www.trypraying.org](http://www.trypraying.org)