

# prayer is . . .

Read the following descriptions of prayer by various authors. Choose one description that best fits how you see prayer. Or formulate your own description using a couple of these.

## Prayer and Patience

Prayer is the suspension of time and the adoption of a patient and quiet heart in order that we might be led into deeper communion with God. Praying requires stepping out of the current of activities in which we are caught up. (Michael K. Duffey, *Be Blessed in What You Do* [New York: Paulist Press, 1988], page 38)

## Being Alert

Our English word *listen* is a derivative of the Anglo-Saxon *hlosnian* which means “to wait in suspense.” It gives a strong clue about the true contemporary meaning of listening. To listen is literally “to wait in suspense,” to turn toward another with such intense expectation that our whole being is on alert. (Fran Ferder, *Words Made Flesh* [Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1986], page 39)

## Calling on God for Help

We want to know God. . . . But often we feel so inadequate and unholy. What makes us think that we have something to say to God, or that God would be interested in our humble efforts to pray? Maybe we know how to do little more than cry out with the first disciples, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” (William E. Reiser, *Drawn to the Divine* [Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987], page 88)

## Tuned In to God

Like [a] television set, we discover that if we are to produce pictures we have to be tuned in to the light that God sends into our darkness. . . . We wear down unless we are tuned to the song of the universe. . . . If we could only realize it, the Divine One whom we seek is within us and all around us. (John P. Gorsuch, *An Invitation to the Spiritual Journey* [New York: Paulist Press, 1990], pages 70–73)

## Prayer and Silence

Our age—the age of widespread and relentless media communication—needs, perhaps more than any earlier generation, to learn the meaning of silence and its place in our lives. . . .

Silence is especially important if I want to learn to pray. For prayer at least at its deepest level is not so much conversation with God, but my silence communing with the silence of God. (William H. Shannon, *Seeking the Face of God* [New York: Crossroad, 1988], page 3)

