

# Four Ways to Pray in a Labyrinth

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Many Christians and churches are rediscovering an ancient prayer practice: a labyrinth. A labyrinth is a geometrically designed walking path leading to and from a central point. It is not a maze; you cannot get lost. There are no dead ends. The point is not disorientation, but orientation.

Labyrinths have been used for centuries to pray and meditate. Here are four ways to get you started:

- 1) **Ask God a question as you enter the path.** Then, as you walk slowly through the twists and turns, listen for an answer. Let your steps and your silence invite the presence and guidance of God.
- 2) **Start your journey to the center with confession** (you may want to visualize your sins being left behind with every step you take). When you reach the center, journey out with affirmation (perhaps visualizing yourself picking things up or putting things on—like the righteousness of Christ, the smile of our Creator, the purity of the Holy Spirit, etc.). Pause at the exit and give thanks for your cleansing journey.
- 3) **Recite a breath prayer\* as you navigate the labyrinth**, perhaps praying a different prayer on each leg or quadrant of your journey.
- 4) **Lay down your burdens as you walk to the center of the labyrinth** (perhaps laying down pebbles along the way as symbols of your worries or cares). In the center, pause to thank God for taking your burdens on himself (1 Peter 5:7). Then count your blessings and give thanks on the journey to the exit.

## \*Breath Prayers

Here are ten short, simple “breath” prayers, based on Scripture, that you can pray anytime, anywhere:

- 1) ***"Lord, have mercy."***

The Desert Fathers, monastic Christians in Egypt in the third and fourth centuries, often prayed the prayer many know as the “Kyrie Eleison” (Greek for “Lord, have mercy”). Also called the “Jesus Prayer” when pronounced as “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner,” it is rooted in Psalm 123:3, Luke 18:13, and Luke 18:38.

## 2) ***"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."***

Based on the words of the boy Samuel (1 Samuel 3:9).

## 3) ***"My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth."***

You might want to use this prayer of affirmation and dependence, from Psalm 121:2, in times of need and desperation.

## 4) ***"Here I am."***

This is a prayer of presence, and availability, based on the cry of the prophet in Isaiah 6:8.

## 5) ***"Show your power."***

This is a prayer (based on Psalm 68:28 and others) to intercede for others, particularly when the need is great and the situation dire.

## 6) ***"When I am afraid, I will trust you."***

Based on Psalm 56:3, this prayer can help you to remain calm and trustful when tempted by worry and fear.

## 7) ***"Not my will, but yours."***

This prayer echoes Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:42).

## 8) ***"Bring your kingdom."***

Based on the prayer Jesus taught his earliest followers (Luke 11:2), you can use this prayer when overwhelmed by the sadness and horrors of the latest news or a devastating diagnosis. In just a few words, it expresses a heartfelt desire for the day when “the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God” (Revelation 12:10) will be fully realized and the Evil One will be defeated.

## 9) ***"Say the word."***

When a Roman centurion sent word to Jesus asking him to heal a sick servant, he told Jesus that he didn’t even feel worthy for the Lord to come into his house. He simply requested, “Say the word, and my servant will be healed” (Luke 7:7). Jesus commended the centurion’s faith.

## 10) ***"Come, Lord Jesus."***

The last prayer recorded in the Bible (Revelation 22:20) is not only a prayer for Christ’s return, but also as a prayer for him to come repeatedly, constantly, into your situation and struggles.