

Prayer with Strangers

TIPS&TOOLS
Ideas to Stimulate Prayer



A longtime friend posted on social media that she was seeking opportunities to pray with strangers. She included an account of even praying with a pet-store salesperson who helped her find fish food.

She inspired me to follow her example. I worked up the courage to ask the first stranger I encountered. The woman was about to take my blood pressure and test my iron levels before I could give blood. A little hesitantly, I said, “I know this may sound odd, but God has put it on my heart to pray for people. Would you mind if I prayed for you right now—and is there anything for which I can pray for you?”

Although surprised, she smiled and thanked me. With tears in her eyes, she told me that she was trying to get back into church and to get her child there, too. After our short, but deep, conversation, we had no time left to pray together. But I assured her I would pray for the needs she shared with me.

I finished the blood donation process and didn’t cross paths with this woman again. But I’m hopeful God will use our short conversation to direct her to Christ.

Overcoming Hesitancy

Here are some simple steps for reaching out in prayer with a stranger, whether at a library, campout, parking lot, playground—or wherever God takes you.

- Be in prayer. Pray for God to make you aware of prayer opportunities. Pray for courage to take a risk. Pray for a heart to connect with people. Praying in advance will

help you overcome any hesitancy.

- Be intentional. Notice the people around you as individuals instead of a mass of humanity—or worse, interruptions in your day. Look for ways to begin conversation. Listen well to the other person. A family I know often asks their server at a restaurant how they might pray for him or her before they give thanks for their meal. My family sometimes gives out “blessing bags” to homeless people we meet. We ask if we might pray for that person, too—but only after we’ve given the bag of helpful items.
- Be polite. After you’ve initiated a conversation, ask kindly if you might pray with the person. Some people may say no, but simply showing interest in them can point them to our loving Father. Or, as in the case with the nurse prepping me for a blood donation, the person may share some heartfelt needs and leave you to pray for them by yourself.
- Be mindful. Remember to continue lifting that person up to the Lord on your own.

Many of us have heard or read stories of people asking God to show Himself to them—to convince them He’s real, that He cares for them. Your step of faith to initiate a short prayer could be the avenue God uses to reveal Himself to a hurting person. God can perfectly orchestrate your obedience to match the need of someone in desperate need of prayer.

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