

7+1 Do's and Don'ts of prayer meetings

1. Be tolerant of other people's praying style. We have freedom as children of God to pray aloud, in silence, in comprehensible language, tongues...

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? (Romans 2:4)

While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears (Hebrews 5:7)

Stand in silence in the presence of the Sovereign LORD (Zephaniah 1:7)

So anyone who speaks in tongues should pray also for the ability to interpret what has been said (1 Corinthians 14:13)

2. Don't interrupt a person while praying. I have had this awful experience where I was openly rebuked during a prayer meeting!
3. When praying for other people be gracious. Note Paul's prayers for the sexually immoral Corinthian church, or Jesus' prayer for his sleepy disciples (1 Corinthians 1:4, John 17)

I always thank my God for you (1 Corinthians 1:4)

4. Speak to God, don't preach to the crowd!

When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites (Matthew 6:5)

5. If you hold a grudge against another member of the group, sort this out BEFORE you pray. Don't use prayer as a disguise to take it out on them

"So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. (Matthew 5:23-24)

6. Forgive. We are all human, so if you don't get it right sometimes, ask God to forgive you, and forgive yourself. Forgive other people who are learning to pray

Instead, be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)

7. Guard the place of prayer, by guarding your own heart. Be careful to say things that are pleasing to God, and not to worry too much about other people's praying styles – that's between them and God

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life (Proverbs 4:23)

A good prayer meeting, where everyone focuses on God, and are gracious to other people, out of reverence to him; can be a place of great joy. If you don't get it right, keep trying!

I will bring them to my holy mountain of Jerusalem and will fill them with joy in my house of prayer. I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices, because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:7)

P.S. One last point – don't use prayer as an excuse to gossip!

Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people. (Leviticus 19:16)