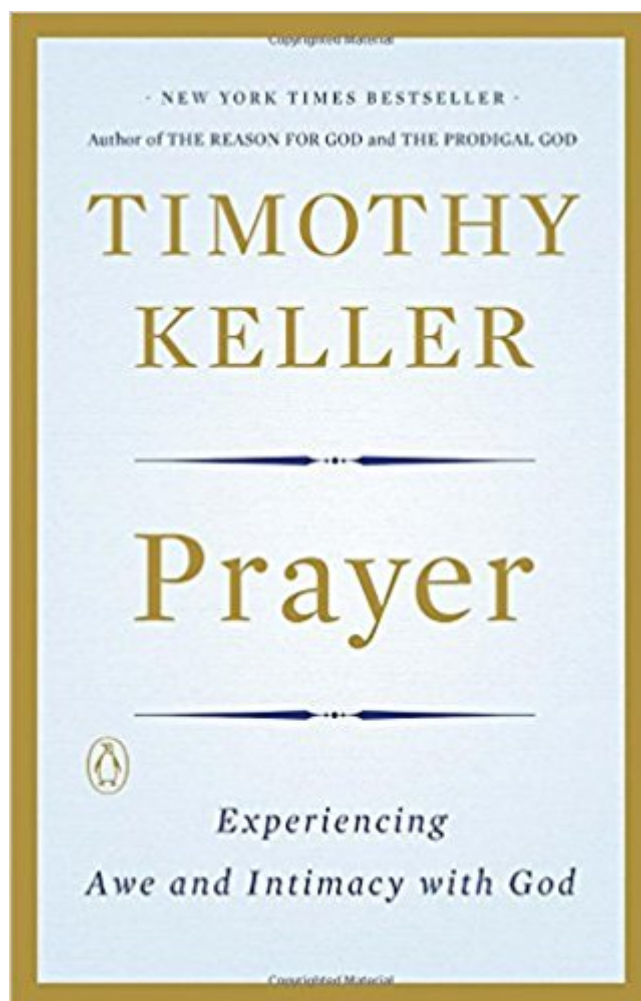


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# Prayer: Experiencing Awe And Intimacy With God



## Synopsis

Renowned pastor and a New York Times bestselling author of the forthcoming *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life* Timothy Keller explores the power of prayer. Christians are taught in their churches and schools that prayer is the most powerful way to experience God. But few receive instruction or guidance in how to make prayer genuinely meaningful. In *Prayer*, renowned pastor Timothy Keller delves into the many facets of this everyday act. With his trademark insights and energy, Keller offers biblical guidance as well as specific prayers for certain situations, such as dealing with grief, loss, love, and forgiveness. He discusses ways to make prayers more personal and powerful, and how to establish a practice of prayer that works for each reader. Dr. Keller's previous books have sold more than one million copies. His Redeemer Presbyterian Church is not only a major presence in his home base of New York, it has also helped to launch more than two hundred fifty other churches in forty-eight cities around the world. His teachings have already helped millions, the majority of whom pray regularly. And with *Prayer*, he'll show them how to find a deeper connection with God.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for *Prayer*. . . Keller provides a contextually rich guide and companion to prayer. - Kirkus. . . If you follow Keller into the arsenal, you will be powerfully equipped to overcome the world/flesh/Devil and see your prayers for kingdom advance answered by almighty God. And if you follow Keller to the banqueting table, you will increasingly feast on new and old treasures of awe and intimacy with your heavenly Father. - The Gospel Coalition Praise for

Encounters with Jesus "Keller's work belongs on the bookshelf of every serious Bible student. It is not a quick read, but, instead should be savored like fine wine, one sip at a time to glean the full impact of his life-changing message." - Examiner.com

Praise for Timothy Keller and his books "Tim Keller's ministry in New York City is leading a generation of seekers and skeptics toward belief in God. I thank God for him." — Billy Graham

"Unlike most suburban megachurches, much of Redeemer is remarkably traditional. What is not traditional is Dr. Keller's skill in speaking the language of his urbane audience . . . Observing Dr. Keller's professorial pose on stage, it is easy to understand his appeal."

— The New York Times

"Fifty years from now, if evangelical Christians are widely known for their love of cities, their commitment to mercy and justice, and their love of their neighbors, Tim Keller will be remembered as a pioneer of the new urban Christians."

— Christianity Today Magazine

"With intellectual, brimstone-free sermons that manage to cite Woody Allen alongside Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Keller draws some 5,000 young followers every Sunday. Church leaders see him as a model of how to evangelize urban centers across the country, and Keller has helped plant 50 gospel-based Christian churches around New York plus another 50 from San Francisco to London."

— New York Magazine

"Theologically rich and philosophically informed, yet accessible and filled with practical wisdom."

— Comment Magazine

on Every Good Endeavor

"This book is for us all and through its reading it can change and reshape your entire outlook on your life."

— Sarah Macintosh on Every Good Endeavor

"It's a great resource to equip you to speak with your secular friends; to show them why the Christian understanding of marriage is not only a tremendous blessing, it's the only one that works."

— ChristianPost.com on The Meaning of Marriage

"The Meaning of Marriage is incredibly rich with wisdom and insight that will leave the reader, whether single or married, feeling uplifted. While the book is filled with expertly selected biblical verses, nonreligious readers willing to try on these observations may find answers not only to the meaning of marriage but to that even bigger question—the meaning of life itself."

— The Washington Times on The Meaning of Marriage

"This is the book I give to all my friends who are serious spiritual seekers or skeptics."

— Rick Warren, author of The Purpose Driven Life, on The Reason for God

"Keller mines material from literary classics, philosophy, anthropology and a multitude of other disciplines to make an intellectually compelling case for God. Written for skeptics and the believers who love them, the book draws on the author's encounters as founding pastor of New York's booming Redeemer

Presbyterian Church. [The Reason for God] should serve both as testimony to the author's encyclopedic learning and as a compelling overview of the current debate on faith for those who doubt and for those who want to reevaluate what they believe, and why.

— Publishers Weekly on *The Reason for God*

— "World has briefly reviewed about 200 books over the past year. Many stand out, but one in particular is likely to change many lives and ways of thinking. World's Book of the Year is Tim Keller's *The Reason for God*."

— Marvin Olasky on *The Reason for God* From the Hardcover edition.

TIMOTHY KELLER was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Bucknell University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary. He was first a pastor in Hopewell, Virginia. In 1989 he started Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City with his wife, Kathy, and their three sons. Today, Redeemer has more than five thousand regular Sunday attendees and has helped to start more than two hundred and fifty new churches around the world. Also the author of *The Songs of Jesus*, *Preaching*, *Encounters with Jesus*, *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering*, *Every Good Endeavor*, *The Meaning of Marriage*, *Generous Justice*, *Counterfeit Gods*, *The Prodigal God*, *Jesus the King*, and *The Reason for God*, Timothy Keller lives in New York City with his family. From the Hardcover edition.

There are two topics I try to read books on regularly: the gospel and prayer. I read on the gospel because I need it to grow me, to humble me, to sanctify me, and to help me remember what God has done in Christ to save me. I read on prayer because my prayer life needs encouragement and guidance to strengthen my desire and skills at communicating with God. Naturally, when I heard one of my favorite authors, Timothy Keller, was coming out with a book on prayer, I was eager to get my hands on a copy and dig in. *Prayer: Experiencing Prayer and Intimacy with God* is a book that was birthed out of Keller's realization of his own shortcomings in prayer. Both he and his wife were diagnosed with diseases during a certain season of their lives (his was thyroid cancer and hers was Crohn's disease). This coupled with pastoring in Manhattan around the time of the September 11th terrorist attacks forced Keller to his knees and really begin to practice and wrestle with the concept of prayer. Readers will sense within the first five pages just how well-read and well-thought-out Keller is in dealing with prayer. Keller sought to write on the essentials of prayer from a "theological, experiential, and methodological" perspective, and thus do something most books on prayer seldom do (1).

**A Brief Summary** This book is divided into five parts, each comprising from two to five chapters. Part one is called "Desiring Prayer," which answers the "why?" question about prayer and

digs into its necessity, mapping out the terrain for the rest of the book. Part two, "Understanding Prayer," describes the many differing views of prayer from many vantage points including world religions, the non-religious, and various Christian traditions. He then moves to discuss how prayer is our response to God's Word and share how the Trinity is essential to true prayer. Part three, "Learning Prayer," interacts with great theologians from church history (Augustin, Luther, and Calvin), sharing their instruction and methods in prayer. (I was especially helped by Keller's interaction with Luther's teaching on meditation on Scripture and the Holy Spirit "preaching to us" in prayer.) Keller then moves on to prescribe modeling our prayers along the Lord's Prayer before laying out a biblical and balanced grid of what prayer is, what it requires, what it gives, and where it takes us. Part four, "Deepening Prayer," dives deeper into meditation and the experiential aspect of prayer, interacting with theologians like John Owen, J.I. Packer, Jonathan Edwards, and C.S. Lewis along gleaning truth and offering critique of medieval and Catholic practices of mystical prayer. Part five, "Doing Prayer," practically teaches just that: the place of praise in prayer, the role of the gospel in prayer, and our ability to ask for help in prayer. The last chapter offers a guide for daily prayer, sharing sample devotions and methods to practice.

My Experience

Simply put, I was floored by Prayer. There is much that he mentioned that will change my life and practice of prayer. Here are a few things that have been echoing in my head the past several days:--We are to pray in Jesus name, not our own. This means that our basis for approaching God is the finished work of Christ and that we shouldn't think our good works or performance earns us access to God.--We are to always have the gospel in focus during prayer to keep us humble, fuel our praise, and provide us so many reasons to give thanks to God in prayer. If we are in Christ, it also grounds our prayer in reality and not circumstances around us.--Meditating on Scripture is a bridge that moves from Scripture reading to heartfelt prayer.--Prayer-lists can be unhelpful if they are merely rattled off to God like a grocery list. They should be accompanied with theological reasoning and self-examination.--I also greatly valued interacting with people from church history and their experience in prayer.

What Center Church: Doing Balanced Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City did for equipping and encouraging gospel-centered ministers, Prayer does for equipping and encouraging gospel-centered pray-ers. The rich theology of Prayer grounded me in biblical truth and motivated me for prayer; the experiential aspect guided me in understanding more of what prayer is like while pushing me to dig deeper; and the methodological section equipped me to develop my own practical and sustainable life of prayer that makes a difference. I feel like I've just gone through a masters-level class on prayer. Keller interacts with a variety of authors and theologians and puts together a scholarly--but not overly-scholarly--treatment on prayer that may be the most

well-rounded book on prayer there is. Who This Is For Prayer is a book for people who want biblical grounding in prayer, a gospel motivation to pray, and practical methods for prayer. This book might be hard for some due to its somewhat scholarly nature (Keller writes for a well-educated congregation in Manhattan), but shouldn't scare people away who are serious about maturing in their understanding and experience of prayer. I could see this book being widely read by a variety of people. Christians looking to deepen their understanding and practice of prayer will find it invaluable. Small groups will value its practical instruction, gospel-grounding, and prescribed methods, while Bible school and seminary students will value the depth of citations and additional resources in the appendix and learning from different Christian traditions they might not otherwise have exposure to. The true value of this book will not lie in having read and understood it, but from having it change your daily life and practice. I am greatly challenged to more intentionally pursue a richer, deeper, more faithful and more God-honoring time in prayer. I hope it does the same for you.

Title: Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God  
Author: Timothy Keller  
Publisher: Dutton  
HouseYear: 214  
Rating: 5 Stars  
Originally Published at KevinHalloran.net

Hold on! Is it a book about prayer? Another book about prayer? Is there any possible way we can benefit from yet another book on the subject of prayer? Tim Keller's Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God answers with a decisive yes. Now here's the interesting thing. There is not much new in this new book. As Keller says, the best books on prayer have already been written. So instead of pursuing novelty (see The Prayer of Jabez or The Circle Maker or a thousand other books) Keller looks to the past, to the deep wells of Christian history, and draws heavily from Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Owen, and Edwards (and, in more recent history, Edmund Clowney). He understands that any new insights on prayer tend to go farther from rather than closer to biblical truth. Instead of looking for new secrets to discover or keys to unlock, Keller looks for fresh ways of saying those old things. Again, there is nothing profoundly new in this new book, but that is its strength, not its weakness. Keller begins his book in an interesting place—the tension between two kinds of prayer. Christians tend to describe prayer in one of two ways: communion-centered or kingdom-centered. Communion-centered prayer is "a means to experience God's love and to know oneness with him. [Such authors] promise a life of peace and of continual resting in God. [They] often give radiant testimonies of feeling regularly surrounded by the divine presence."

Kingdom-centered prayer "sees the essence of prayer not as inward resting but as calling on God to bring in his kingdom. Prayer is viewed as a wrestling match,

often without a clear sense of God's immediate presence. He opts to discard the either-or view and will not drive a wedge between the two. Prayer is both conversation and encounter with God. This is not to say he advocates the kind of prayer you might find among the Roman Catholic mystics whose books remain so popular today. In fact, he pushes firmly against mysticism, against meditation as being an emptying of the mind rather than a filling of it, or against rapturous but mindless prayers. But still he leaves plenty of room for true communion with God, and for the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit who may bring Scripture to mind and cause us to understand it better in those times we are prayerfully meditative. Even as he teaches these things, he leans on the Reformers and Puritans. As I began to read, I had thought that Keller's purpose in the book might be to try to resolve the mysteries of prayer. Over time, though, I came to see that this is not the case. There is much about prayer we cannot understand and may never understand on this side of eternity (and perhaps even after). Keller peers into these mysteries, but he does not attempt to resolve them. He understands that prayer will always be difficult and never over-promises, never lays out a plan that, if followed, will supposedly bring guaranteed or overwhelming results. We can grow in our understanding of prayer and our skill at prayer, but we will never solve it, and will never pray perfectly. One particularly interesting aspect of the book is Keller's definition of prayer. Few books on prayer pause to actually define prayer, but Keller gives it his best shot. Prayer, he says, is a personal, communicative response to the knowledge of God. This accounts for the universality of prayer—all religions, and very nearly all human beings, pray. They pray because they have some knowledge of God through his creation. But as God awakens the hardened hearts of his people, Christians are now able to pray on the basis of much greater and much more specific knowledge. Thus, for the Christian, "praying is continuing a conversation that God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him." Early in his book Keller critiques most books on prayer as being "primarily theological or devotional or practical, but seldom do they combine the theological, experiential, and methodological all under one cover." This is what he has attempted to do, and it is exactly what he has done, as displayed in the book's five parts: Desiring Prayer, Understanding Prayer, Learning Prayer, Deepening Prayer, Doing Prayer. He has written a winsome, well-rounded book that leads through theory and into practice. It is one of the strongest books on prayer I have ever read and it receives my highest recommendation.

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