

Prayer Stretches our Soul

In some ways, prayer is like stretching before and after we exercise. Stretching afterward helps us recover from the workout. Stretching before a workout makes our muscles more pliable and reduces the likelihood of injury. The increased flexibility not only reduces injuries, it also allows for a greater range of performance during our exercise. Stretching helps ensure that the workout will have lasting impact on our bodies.

In much the same way, praying regularly warms us up for life. When prayer is a regular part of our life, trials strengthen us rather than injure us and we recover more quickly. This is because prayer opens our hearts and minds allowing us to perceive the world through the eyes of one another and God. Our new perspective makes room for new possibilities and increased flexibility. Our new open state is then ripe for God to share new insights which ultimately lead to increased spiritual health, growth and fruits of the Spirit which are food for ourselves and our neighbors. Prayer also insures that God's interventions in our own lives and the world around us will have a lasting impact – transforming ourselves and our world into a place of peace and justice just as God promised (See Rev. 21-22 for a vision of God's transformed world.)



But how should we pray?

If we are trying for overall fitness, then we need to stretch different parts of our body – arms, legs, core (belly/back). Different kinds of stretches affect different muscles and it's important to stretch the muscles you will use in the exercise. Likewise, using different kinds of prayer practices prepares you for different kinds of engagement with God by opening you up to new ways that God works with you and expanding your imagination about new ways God might be calling you to engage in your life and the world around you.



There are many kinds of prayer or spiritual practices. Some appear quiet and passive (e.g. contemplation/meditation) while others are quite active (e.g. singing, dancing, walking). Some are intellectual (Bible study)

