

1. Introverts and Extraverts

Do you get your energy from being in a crowd, at a party, "working" a room? This tends to best describe the **Extravert**.

Practices you might consider:

- If this is the case, then you would probably be drawn more to **action-oriented prayer**.
- You will tend to view God through other people, events, Scripture, the natural world.
- You may wish to be more involved and act out your relationship with God as a leader, or in service. Your prayer will be more social- and action-oriented.
- You may, for instance, be drawn to more **communal forms of prayer**.

An excellent resource for extraverts is Nancy Reeves's [Spirituality for Extroverts: \(And Tips for Those Who Love Them\)](#) 2008: Abingdon Press

Do you need to recuperate after a strenuous engagement with a group of people? Do you need to "recharge your batteries" by being alone? This tends to describe the **Introvert**.

Practices you might consider:

- If this is the case, then you would probably be drawn to **reflective forms of prayer**, and the inward journey. You might want to look at the various forms of "inward" spiritual practices described here.
- You will tend to view God through your own personal experience and through inspirational forms of prayer.
- However, part of our growth process is to notice that we are called to the opposite form of prayer to our preferences if we are to grow in balance and in spiritual freedom. We are all called to be in communion with God and to become involved in action.

Some suggestions, then:

- We invite the extravert to step out of a busy life of action and accept the challenge of Ps 46: "Be still and know that I am God."
- We invite the introvert to take the energy gained from his/her rich inner life and give it as gift to others.

2. Intuitives and Sensates

The **intuitive** lives more in the future, cares about possibilities, tends to be drawn by symbols and the use of imagination.

Practices you might consider:

- **Centring prayer** is often helpful for intuitives. In centring prayer, you focus your attention on a single word – Maranatha, Jesus, Love... You say the word over and over, like a mantra, to slow and empty the mind. When thoughts surface to distract you, you return to the mantra. (See Thomas Keating, *Open Mind Open Heart. The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel*, ISBN 0-8264-0696-3).
- Ignatian prayer is entering the Gospel scene as a participant and imagining what it would be like to be there (aka "**Gospel Contemplation**"). Allow yourself to enter fully into the Scripture scene. Allow your imagination to be open to all the possibilities the Lord would like to show you about yourself, your life, and your relationship with him. (For a wide range of suggestions involving Gospel Contemplation, see John Veltri, [.....](#))

- **Praying with your imagination.** A variation on Ignatian prayer, this form also uses imagination, but more in the form of a "fantasy." For instance, you can imagine yourself on a beach with Jesus. What would you be talking about? What might he say to you? (For an excellent set of exercises involving imagination and Gospel Contemplation, see Anthony de Mello, [Sadhana. A Way to God, Christian Exercises in Eastern Form](#). ISBN 0-385-19614-8)
- **Dream work.** Intuitives may find it valuable to pay attention to their dreams. Our dreams are the voice of the unconscious and are one way that God speaks to us. Write your dreams down in a journal in some detail. In prayer, use your dreams to reflect on any insights or feelings your might have. (See Robert A Johnson, [Inner Work](#), Harper and Row, 1986)

The **sensate** lives in the here and now. Life is about what comes through the senses – touch, sight, sound...

Practices you might consider:

- **Practice of the Presence of God.** Sensers can sit with the sense of God's presence without many words or thoughts. Simply to be in God's presence wherever and whatever one is doing is a deep prayer. Brother Lawrence's little classic [The Practice of the Presence of God](#) describes someone who went about the humble tasks of life with the constant sense of God's Presence. It is available online [here](#).
- **Ignatian prayer.** This form works very well for sensates as well as for intuitives because it focusses on the senses. Ignatius encouraged his followers to imagine the sights and sounds and smells in each Gospel scene.
- **Holy listening.** For the extraverted sensing, simply learning to listen with your heart to what people are saying to you is a form of prayer. Paying loving attention to someone else's story, without judgment or criticism is a form of openness to the other and emulates Jesus' presence to those who approached him. You may, in the process, develop the sense of listen to God in your own life as well as in the life of others.
- **Mindfulness:** Savour and appreciate the loveliness of the earth and all its riches. Take time to feel and use your senses. Take time to look, really look, at things. Pay attention to what is really happening around you. One of the best introductions to mindfulness is Thich Naht Hanh's [Peace is Every Step](#).
- **Body prayer.** As you practice the simple presence of God, use your body to express your prayer. There is a wide range of established body prayers, that use gestures and postures to express wordlessly what is on your heart. Experiment with forms of bodily gestures such as kneeling, bowing, prostrating to express your deepest feelings. Learn and practice forms of gentle, reflective and intentional body movement such as Tai Chi or Yoga.
- **Breath prayer.** This is the easiest and simplest form of body prayer and is often used in conjunction with other forms of meditation. It combines mindfulness of one's breath as well as deep relaxation and can be combined with a mantra – breathing out one's tension and breathing in God's love. It can be combined with walking meditation as a form of mindfulness.

3. Feeling (Relational) and Thinking (Logical)

The **Thinking** type uses **logic, facts and truth** in judging situations. The focus of the thinker is usually "is it right, just?"

Practices you might consider:

- **Praying the Divine Office:** Thinkers appreciate the sense of order and routine typical of praying the Hours. A variety of approaches are available on the market today, including two on-line versions, one at [www.ignatian.org](#) (LINK) and one at [www.ignatian.org](#).
- Focus on **justice and peace:** The thinker might wish, however s/he prays, to focus on justice and peace perspectives. This might mean getting involved in local action groups, writing to MPs on

important issues, etc.

- **Bible Study:** Another approach of particular interest to the thinking type is Bible study – a focus on the meaning, the context, the implications, the references, and the application of a text. Of particular interest are those passages that outline a “rule of life,” or a creed, for example the Beatitudes, or some of Paul’s letters in which he begins an articulation of the “Cosmic Christ.”
- **Spiritual reading:** Thinkers would also be attracted to good, sound articulation of a spiritual theology: what is the grounding of spirituality? What does a spiritual psychology look like? What are the historical roots of contemporary spirituality? What are contemporary theologians and scholars saying about God? Christ? Jesus? One needs to remember that the purpose of such study is not knowledge for its own sake but challenge to deepen our own relationship with God. Check our [Bible Study](#) page.

The **Feeling** type uses **personal values** and a concern for **relationships** rather than logic and reason when passing a judgment or making a decision.

Practices you might consider:

- Developing a sense of **intimacy with God**. The Feeling type believes in relationships. Anything that can foster that sense of friendship, relationship, and intimacy with the God who is closer to ourselves than we are, will be deeply satisfying to an Feeler.
- **Blessed History:** Reflecting on the moments in our lives when we have felt God’s intimate presence will yield significant results for the Feeler: “you were there for me when...” To learn more about [Blessed History](#), click here.
- **Ignatian Exercises** – especially Week Two: In the lengthy “Week Two” in Ignatius’ Exercises, (for a brief overview of the Ignatian Exercises, click here (Internal LINK to a page on the Exx) one meditates on events in the life of Jesus, with a view to getting to know him better, loving him more, and committing oneself to becoming his disciple. This is all about relationship. To do these Exercises on-line with Creighton University’s On-line retreat, click here (LINK).
- **The Jesus Prayer:** This is a form of mantric meditation in which we repeat the name of Jesus over and over, to let it sink into our whole being, and to become very conscious that he lives within us.
- **Spiritual companionship:** Feeling types will benefit from establishing a relationship with a spiritual companion or spiritual director. This relationship allows for a deeper personal connection with a mentor who can provide guidance and clarification in one’s spiritual journey. For a list of spiritual directors in your area, click here (Internal LINK to a page on spiritual directors). For the names of Covenanted Spiritual Companions at Harcourt Memorial United Church, click here (Internal LINK).

4. Temperament and Prayer

Other approaches to the MBTI include a focus on “temperaments,” usually, a pattern resulting from the interaction of two dimensions of the MBTI profile. Here are the most common patterns, along with a description of a typical spiritual practice pattern. See if any of this helps you sort out what might be the best way for you to engage in an intentional spiritual practice. (Most of this material is taken from C.P. Michael and M.C. Norrisey [Prayer and Temperament. Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types](#), ISBN 0-940136-01-5)

SJ – Ignatian prayer

If you are an SJ, you...

- have a strong sense of history
- want to belong and like ceremonies and ritual
- have a deep sense of obligation, and always want to feel useful.
- committed to caring for those in need and to contribute to the good of society
- have a strong sense of tradition
- are suspicious of change and are usually conservative in their tastes

- consider the law important
- are careful, cautious, accurate, industrious
- tend to lead toward pessimism

For you, as an SJ, Ignatian prayer...

- is a carefully organized regimen of striving toward a relationship with God
- offers an orderly, well-planned agenda to follow
- offers a continuity with the deep tradition
- offers an experience of the history of salvation in the present by helping you use your sense perceptions and sensible imagination
- tries to make the Gospel scenes become so alive and real for you that you can make a personal application of their teaching

For example...

- Choose a topic
- Offer a preparatory prayer
- Develop a "composition of place": what do you see, hear, feel, touch, smell?
- Ask for special grace needed
- Use your imagination to enter the scene
- Engage in a colloquy (conversation) with God the Father, Jesus Christ and Mary, or any other spiritual figures you relate to
- Close with the Our Father

PRAYER SUGGESTION: (Mark 9:14-29) Read the story. Imagine yourself in the story, as whatever character your imagination presents to you... Let the story play itself out. Try to hear a conversation with Jesus... If you are led to be the boy in the story, bring your own affliction to Jesus and ask him to cure it.

NF – Augustinian Prayer

If you are an NF, you...

- are usually creative, optimistic, verbal, persuasive, outspoken, good at both writing and speaking
- have a need for self-expression
- are a good listener, good at counselling, good in resolving conflicts and making peace
- like face-to-face encounters
- able to read non-verbal communication
- have deep feelings
- find it difficult to handle negative criticism
- but blossom under positive affirmation
- need acceptance and support
- prefer collaboration to competition
- are highly committed to helping others and relate well to those who befriend you
- are always searching for meaning, authenticity and self-identity
- have a tremendous hunger for growth in your inner life, which can often only be satisfied through prayer, spiritual reading and contemplation

For you, as an NF, Augustinian prayer...

- emphasizes daily prayer
- opens you to your imagination and your Intuitive function
- is the "prayer of transposition" because it asks the question: what does the Scripture mean to me today?
- consists of a dialogue between God and you, best expressed in the four steps of Lectio Divina

- emphasizes relationship with the Trinity

For example...

- Read a Scripture passage and "Transpose" it, bringing the scripture into the present day.
- Read the words of the Bible read as if they were addressed to us.
- Search for a possible meaning- looking at future possibilities.
- Use your imagination as you read.
- Dialogue with God to establish relationship

PRAYER SUGGESTION: (Matthew 7:1-5) Imagine Jesus speaking these words to you today. How far do they apply? What is he asking of you? What changes is he asking you to make in your life?

SP – Franciscan Prayer

If you are an SP, you...

- need to feel free, unconfined and able to do whatever your inner spirit moves you to do
- are impulsive and dislike being tied down by rules
- love action, and are easily bored by the status quo
- are crisis-oriented
- good at unsnarling messes
- able to get things moving
- are a good trouble-shooter as well as negotiator
- have unlimited energy as long as the crisis exists
- live very much in the present, with little concern for the past or the future
- thrive on excitement, adventure, risk, challenge
- are a good entertainer, the life of a party

For you, as an SP, Franciscan prayer...

- offers "spirit-filled" prayer, a prayer form that is totally open to the presence and voice of the Spirit
- sees God in all of creation
- sees work as prayer
- is "virtual prayer," i.e., the prayer of good works
- helps to keep the awareness of the presence of God in every moment of the day
- offers "mantric" forms of prayer to accompany your daily activity – the "Jesus Prayer," for instance
- encourages spontaneous, "charismatic" type prayer
- loves to celebrate the goodness, greatness, love and power of God
- encourages an informal communing with God

For example...

- Organize your prayer time around freedom and spontaneity; be flexible, making use of your senses.
- Make your prayer time a time for celebration; keep it informal
- Consider short-range projects – work with your hands – as a prayer form, finding a way to make the work intentionally prayerful
- Consider as prayer some form of creative work – art, music, crafts – finding a way to make the creative work intentionally prayerful

PRAYER SUGGESTION : Plan an act of charity for someone in need; then endeavour to carry it out, either alone or with the help of others.

NT – Thomistic Prayer

If you are an NT, you...

- possess a very logical mind
- gravitate to anything complicated exacting or challenging to the mind
- have a great thirst for truth
- have a tremendous desire to understand, comprehend, explain, predict
- what to master and excel in whatever you undertake
- have a tendency to be a perfectionist and have a disdain for stupidity and incompetence
- often have a sense of personal inadequacy
- tend to be a workaholic
- are very competitive and always try to avoid making mistakes
- tend to be impersonal in terms of relationships
- tend to have some difficulty communicating subtle, affective messages appropriately
- are sometime oblivious to others' emotional responses
- delight in planning your life as well as that of others
- sometimes have a deep desire for power and control, over others as well as over nature

For you, as an NT, Thomistic Prayer..

- offers an approach similar to that of the scientist approaching a problem
- offers logical, rational, and discursive meditation, leading thought from premise to conclusion through logical steps
- focusses on a search for the truth of some object of meditation
- offers a prayer form that systematically uses the seven questions – who, what, why, where, how, when, with what?
- focus on conversion – the metanoia experience – bringing about some change in behaviour

For example:

- seek to attain the whole truth about a subject that your are reflecting upon
- engage in “discursive meditation,” engaging the mind, will, and intuition to wrestle with an idea, and reflect upon it from all perspectives
- “walk around” whatever you are reflecting upon: ask the seven questions

PRAYER SUGGESTION:

Take a scriptural passage or a doctrine you are struggling with. For instance, the doctrine of the cross in Mk 8:34-38. What does Jesus mean when he insists that in order to be his disciple we take up our cross and follow him? What are the crosses in your present life? Are you carrying them in the same way that Jesus carried his cross to Calvary? What do you need to change in your present attitude toward your crosses?