

Petition

Prayer Tool: Palms Up, Palms Down

What?

This prayer tool explains “Palms Up, Palms Down” ; a simple tool to partner with God in prayer.

Why?

“To cast our burden upon God, is to rest upon his providence and promise. And if we do so, he will carry us in the arms of his power, as a nurse carries a child; and will strengthen our spirits by his Spirit, so that they shall sustain the trial.” Matthew Henry

Bible reference:

“Cast your cares on the Lord, and he will sustain you.” Psalm 55:22

A quick introduction to Palms Up, Palms Down

A simple tool we can use which helps us develop a life of fruitful partnership with God in prayer while simultaneously deepening our trust in His constant care is called ‘palms up, palms down’.

The contemplatives referred to this kind of prayer as ‘re-collection’, which is a form of centring prayer. However this tool enables us to remain in ‘the rest of God’ but then to flow into a place of petitioning and asking God.

It is particularly useful in the mornings because you can bring your requests, dreams and fears for the impending day, to the Lord.

Do it: Palms Up, Palms Down

Palms Down

Sit in a comfortable position, not rigid but not slouched either, and invite the presence of God. Begin by placing your hands, palms facing down, on your legs.

This 'palms down' posture is a symbolic indication that you want to 'hand over' your requests to God.

As you sit before the Lord, begin to name any worries or anxieties you may have about the day ahead. Speak out your concerns for a meeting you will lead, a family member who is ill, a report you have to give in work, or a person you will need particular grace for! Remember, don't pray what you think God wants to hear, pray what is inside you.

Whatever is weighing on your heart or on your mind, name it in prayer before God and imagine yourself releasing it on to God. You may even want to picture the hands of your Heavenly Father under your hands, receiving those things you are handing over to Him. As you engage with the presence of God notice any sensation in your body or spirit - perhaps a sense of relief or release - as you surrender to His love and care.

Palms Up

After a number of minutes in silence, turn your hands around, palms facing up, the backs of your hands gently resting on your legs. As you do, begin to ask Jesus for His peace, His courage, His presence, His love or His direct action, in place of the worry, concern, anticipation or request that you had released to the Lord only moments before this.

In the quiet, rest in this divine exchange, receiving fresh peace, presence and power in place of the natural concerns and requests. Be open to receive a particular promise from scripture, a sense of direction or an impression in your imagination concerning some of these requests.

Rest

Finally, remain a few more moments without asking for anything. Simply rest in His love, and as you have handed your petitions to God remember He has still got the whole world in His hands. Believe that God is loving you in these moments and allow His presence to be more than enough.

Books related to Palms Up, Palms Down

- Inspiration for this prayer tool comes from Richard Foster's book, "Celebration of Discipline".