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The types of prayer



There are many ways in which we can categorize the types of prayer. A simple one is the following:

The confessional prayer

The first kind is prayer with one's own words – the personal, 'confessional' prayer. It is very comforting and we should practice it, because it aids us in combating loneliness. During this kind of prayer, we simply converse with the Lord, portraying to Him with our own thoughts our concerns to our heavenly Father.

As this prayer is a product of our heart, it is impossible for God to disregard such a prayer. However we have here two problems: the first is that we tend to close the perfect God in the very narrow frame of our vision: we want God to act when and exactly how we want. The second problem is the wandering of the mind.

The linear prayer

The second kind of prayer is the linear prayer. It is like a small story – for example "Our Father". This kind of prayer is very beautiful because they are the personal prayers of the saints and is extensively used in the Church's services. However this type of prayer also has a problem which is shared with the first type of prayer: the wandering of the mind.

This occurs because of the mass of information – that is thoughts – in the prayer, so the mind will easily wander in and out of the prayer and think about the meanings, for example, instead of praying to our Father in heaven we will start to think about our daily bread, how to acquire it and how tasty it was also!

The cyclical prayer: The Jesus Prayer

That's why the most powerful prayer is the cyclical prayer, the so-called "Jesus Prayer": "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me". This facility comes from it having the Name of Jesus, which itself is a source of divine energy, and because there isn't many thoughts inside which will cause the mind to wander. Also, even if the mind will wander, this is very easy to observe because the cyclical prayer will cease.

Besides that, a prayer rope will help even further because it uses the senses which generates the most powerful sensations, the tactile sense, and likewise, the prayer rope will assure us a constant number of prayers so we will avoid the instability of our fallen nature.

The types of prayer: conclusion

These are the types of prayer: confessional, linear and cyclical. Remember them

and, also, remember when and how to use each other. We must choose wisely, depending on situation.

Based on Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra, Elder Joseph of Vatopedi, Saint Joseph Hesychast

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