



P(raise) R(epent) A(sk) Y(ield)

When I was a teenager, I was heavily involved with various church youth groups. We attended the local Presbyterian Church, and as a kid, I did things with my own church. But as I got older (and was able to drive myself places), I gravitated to the local Baptist church because many of my friends were there. By the time I got to college, I was all in with the more conservative principals of the Baptist church. It was hard being at a more liberal university in Nashville – I don't even know where the closest Baptist Church was. There was a Methodist church across the street (if you were willing to cross West End Avenue, which was an adventure on its own!) but I was not quite ready to be a Methodist at that point in my life. Fortunately, while Vanderbilt was slightly more liberal than I was used to, Nashville was still pretty conservative, so I was able to watch the Baptist or Presbyterian services on television on Sunday mornings. Yes, I was that college student, with a Bible in my hand singing along to the hymns on Sunday morning while (some of) my dorm mates were sleeping off a rough evening. As you can imagine, I was super popular in college (NOT!)

Now that I am an adult, I am much more open to other ways to worship. We thoroughly enjoy being Methodist now! One of the things that stuck with me from youth group all of those years ago was how to pray. You would think praying is easy, but for many (like myself) that is not always the case. I never really knew what to do, what to say. Is that request too much, too little? Who are we to request something of God, the Almighty?

Then I had a great Bible study lesson that worked for me.

Praise

A prayer should start with Thanksgiving. Without God's Love, we would not be able to do anything! Thank Him for this day, this group, this opportunity to pray. Sometimes we forget about what is going well in our lives. This is a nice simple reminder.

Repent

We also need to acknowledge that we are sinners. Everyone is. We are human! Repent and ask for forgiveness. Then you are open to God's love. Admittedly, this is a hard step for me, but is certainly an important one.

Ask

This is the part we tend to jump to with prayer. God, help me. Heal me. Or even the more mundane, let me win this game! We are allowed to ask God for help. You may not get the answer that you want, and that is okay. But Ask! God loves you. And will listen.

Yield

End a prayer with the understanding that this is all God's will. Just like The Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done." We give our prayers to God. That is all we can do. We cannot affect the outcome of our prayers, but we can continue to love, honor and praise.

I am hardly a theologian. I learn from church, Bible studies, and yes, youth group. I just found this a simple way to understand prayer. I hope it reaches you in some way as well. Don't forget to P(raise), R(epent), A(sk), Y(ield)!