

PENTECOST PEOPLE:

Many ways of Praying

Here are a few ideas that could help your church community think more about ways in which to increase variety and cultural diversity in its worship.

Encourage prayer in first languages

There is nothing more liberating than someone being free to pray in their first language – this brings a release of passion and connection that, even though others may not understand the words, certainly fires the Spirit.



Posture

When we laugh, when we cry, when we relax, when we show respect, when we listen, when we watch sport, we change our posture. When we pray, posture and physicality should feature. Posture in prayer is hugely important in many cultural contexts, and so it is important we allow space for this. Kneeling, standing, bowing, sitting, laying – all have significance as we pray, and are featured regularly in scripture.

Praying together out loud

This is an incredibly powerful way for a community of believers to pray, and yet for some it is a real challenge. It's a very natural way to pray for many, yet for others, especially white British like myself, it's an alien concept. Worth persevering with – God's people crying out together in anger, desperation, passion, is inspiring and faith-building.

Creative arts

For some, spoken words are not an easy way to express, so making space for creativity and expression in prayer using art, craft, written word, and music in prayer is very important, and often opens up a whole new world of prayer for many.

Visual meditation

There is a wealth of Christian art that helps us to focus on God and informs our praying. Meditation on a piece of art, guided by thoughts and questions allows a different level of thought and prayer. Using art drawn from a variety of cultures also allows us to develop an understanding of how scripture is interpreted in other cultural settings.

Youth and children

As we know, children pray in ways that are free from over analysis, cynicism and embarrassment. We should allow our children opportunities to teach us how to pray, how to be honest in our prayers. Our young people will often bring musical/artistic styles in prayer and worship that are culturally important to them, and although validating these in our community gatherings can be challenging to some, it is very important if we want to engage and be inclusive across cultures.

Being aware of the diversity of approaches to prayer within our communities, and then allowing time and space to utilise and play with these forms, will enrich us, challenge us and bless us as we look to pray and worship in power and unity.