
‘Getting closer to God’ stories

The stories below relate to the way many people became closer to God in everyday life, and in a variety of circumstances. They demonstrate that to be closer to God does not need to be through prayer, although prayer is a vital element in any connection we have with our Father. The stories illustrate that every one is different so our experiences of closeness will vary from one to another. The names of the people providing the stories have been changed to enable privacy.

God’s closeness in

Daily life

Grief and bereavement

Illness trauma

Vision

Quiet meditation

Consistency

Barbara

I find that my connections with God can wax and wane like the moon and when I am distant I wonder what it is that has let my communication with such a loving Father slip again, as he is the constant in our relationship.

I am that child who forgets to check in with him through the day, forgets to acknowledge him with grateful thoughts, or cry out for help over the small and the larger matters,

I often revert to my 'old spots' and lean on my own strength for these worries.

But then I remember that my strength is weak so I then will turn my face back to my Father, often in desperation.

I wish I could do better and just keep Him with me in my head all day. Yet he is in my heart- he will never leave me.

He made me and knows me intimately. Flaws and all, He still loves me and wants me to draw close to him again when I become distant. I know this, and this is of such comfort. What sort of love is this? Divine love that brings me peace.

I have found that if I allow enough time in the mornings to spend time reading devotions, scripture and praying for the day ahead, laying out all my concerns and putting my people in His care, I do feel more at ease for the day that stretches ahead. I sit in bed with my coffee and my books, precious quiet time before the busyness of the day begins. I do really relish this time with my Father. If I miss this step, I do often feel out of kilter for the rest of the day.

So, the alarm gets set a little earlier and I choose connection with my dearly loved and appreciated Father. All praise is to my grace filled, merciful Father.

Margaret

Unexpected grief redefined my relationship with God as it does and has for many. God's heart and hands are always open, and we especially find that when there is nowhere else to go.

Having recovered somewhat from my initial trauma some years ago, I have needed to find another stimulus to keep that communication with God alive and active.

Prayer of course is the basis but I also find strength in spending time alone surrounded by creation. Who cannot be aware of God's presence when we take time to really absorb the beauty and intricacies of God's handiwork.

When speaking with those who do not have a close relationship with God, few deny the splendour of creation so I usually suggest that "When all else fails - Trust God and Pray".

William

I was blessed to grow up close to God, but in my youth, it was in a somewhat academic way.

As I have grown older, as Jesus said to Peter, "when you are converted", I have become much more familiar with God.

And more recently through illness and tragedy, my reliance on Him has become so important and so necessary, because without that stability, I wouldn't have been able to overcome the anger I felt at the death of my grandson. I still don't know why he had to die, but one day I will.

I have reached acceptance through prayer and God's grace, through close conversations with God and with Jesus, through journaling and translating the journals into videos, and through the unfailing and unconditional love of family.

Praise be to our Heavenly Father.

Arthur

I was in the ICU recovery room after heart surgery. I was feeling OK when suddenly I had increasing double vision. I mentioned to the specialist recovery room doctor that I could see two of him. I heard someone say, "His blood pressure is shooting up – it's over 200!"

There was a lot of immediate action with an injection into the cannula and someone calling out readings, except the BP was not coming down fast enough for the doctor. He said, "Give him 'x' ml more!" While this was happening, I was very conscious, and I feel so grateful to say that I felt really close to God. One of the dangers of this surgery was stroke and this was on the point of happening. I was praying quietly.

The episode lasted about 10 minutes and when asked again I was happy to say that I was back to seeing only one doctor! God was indeed with me. I had no further difficulties and many months on, the surgery was what might be termed a complete success.

Yes, I was so grateful for God's direct intervention at a very critical time. He was there when I needed Him – He is always close and constant, and He looked after me. It is very humbling that such a mighty God can look after one of His unworthy children so carefully. The apostle Paul describes God's grace in this way: "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" 2 Cor 9:15. Good reason to be thankful for being close to God.

Lorraine

I am a very visual person, so I sit very still, be quiet and relax. In my mind I imagine I am in the throne room of Revelation: there before me is a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And The One who sits there has the appearance of jasper and ruby, and a rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.

*"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for You created all things,
and by Your will they were created
and have their being."*

In my mind's eye I am a small child and The One who sits on the throne is my Father. At His right hand is Jesus, His son, another child of His. They are my family. I am safe and protected there. I know without a shadow of a doubt that I am loved beyond all reason. I know I am wanted there. I belong.

Sometimes I just sit quietly at their feet and watch and listen. I just want to be there with them. Other times I climb onto His knee like a trusting child – I just need to be held, or rest my head on his shoulder and feel safe. Sometimes I bow my head in shame and can barely approach the throne, never mind make eye contact with My Father and the one who died such a cruel death for me. I have betrayed the love and trust they shower on me, despite my unworthiness. Sometimes I hide behind the curtains in stubborn embarrassment because I can't and won't face them.

But always, always, my Father loves me more than I can begin to explain or understand. He told me that His love casts out all fear and I trust Him implicitly. Nothing I can do can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus, nor make them love me less or more. His generosity is overwhelming. He's the best Father anyone could ask for and I'm proud to be his daughter. I wish I could bring everyone home to meet Him – I know He'd love them too.

"If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you," says the Lord
(Jeremiah 29:13)

Veronica

I find it necessary to put time aside to be quiet... whether I'm walking in creation or at home. Taking time to breathe in and out slowly and be thankful for the time to reflect. I alternate between: Reading God's word, even as simple as a daily bible verse or a good bible-based book / exposition

or listen to a great talk be it on an Ecclesial website, Good Christadelphian Talks, Wilderness Conversations etc.

Then I feel at peace, settled and renewed with the reminder of our gracious God and the Hope we have and after hearing of how our brother's/sisters who have gone before lived. The Hymn 222 "When my love for God grows weak ... Then to life I turn again, Learning all the worth of pain" describes how this time of reflection makes me feel.

Susanne

For me, growing closer to God has been in the ebbs and flow of life - the lived experience of being a wife of a full time studying husband has been challenging but in those 3.5 years I have grown closer to God.

The first year of the study I was blessed with a part-time job that fitted in with our family in an incredible way. When Covid hit there was no casual work to be had, but my employer was good to our team, and we still had work.

In the second year my husband had his practical work cancelled due to Covid and it seemed he wouldn't be able to complete the course. That weekend in June was one of the hardest moments in my life as we didn't know what would happen. Would he complete the degree or would we have to start again? That same year events occurred with a pet that led to its death. It led to a struggle with anxiety and feelings of depression and helplessness that I had not experienced before.

However, my husband was blessed with work and for months I was able to reduce my hours. He heard that he was able to retake his final practice unit and complete the degree. He is now 1.5 years on in his new career.

Throughout this time my prayer life has grown, my belief and faith that God sees all and knows what is best has been established in a way I hadn't experienced for some time.

So, looking back, I'm thankful for those experiences. I believe our life experience is the greatest teacher, if we are open to the belief that we acknowledge God in all our ways and He will direct our paths.
