

# PRAYER

Joy Cowley

I think it's kind of funny  
that we have only one word for prayer,  
when we come to God in so many ways.

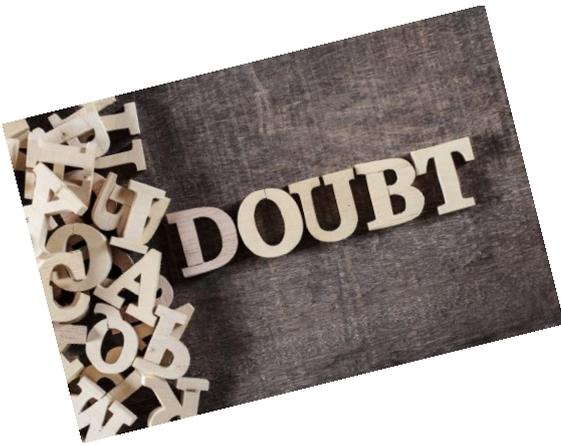


Sometimes,  
There is the barn-storming  
prayer,  
the hammering on the door,  
the cry of pain or anger  
from a desperate grief  
demanding answers.



Then there is the prayer for  
others,  
a leaning of the heart  
toward those in trouble,  
a plea that God will draw them  
out of their distress.





There is the prayer of doubt,  
the expression of disbelief  
throwing off outgrown ideas  
so that we can see who we really  
are  
and the closeness of God's love.

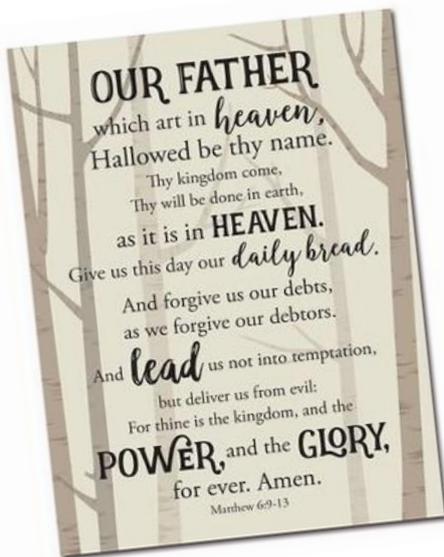
There is the prayer of ashes,  
the cry for forgiveness,  
accompanied by the relief of  
truth  
and the freedom to put  
burdens  
down at the side of the  
road.



There is the prayer  
of celebration  
a festive prayer  
adorned with all  
kinds of Hallelujahs,  
gratitude waved like  
a banner from a  
thank you heart.



There is the prayer for  
guidance,  
for sign-posts along the way  
to help us understand our  
giftedness  
and the steps we need to  
take on our journey to God.



There is the prayer of  
community,  
words of a loved tradition  
falling on us in familiar notes,  
and drawing us into the  
sacrament  
of a faith given and shared.

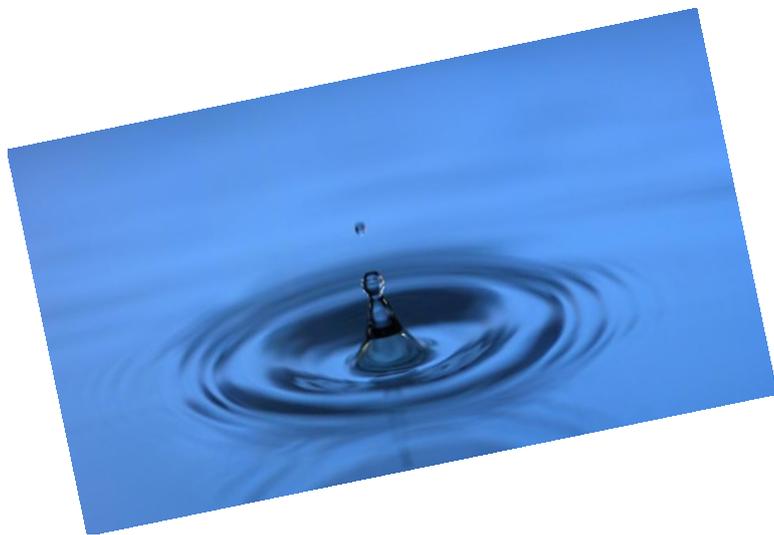


There is the prayer of awe,  
when we stand in the  
presence  
of the intelligence of the  
universe,  
God powerful in distant  
galaxies  
and in every cell of our  
being.

There is the prayer of conversation,  
the everyday talk to God our friend  
who helps to wash the dishes  
and change the punctured tyre,  
who is never too big for the detail  
of our lives.



There is the prayer of quiet,  
in that deep well of inner  
silence  
when nothing happens  
and everything happens  
and we are wholly  
renewed.



Then there is the nameless prayer,  
the prayer of God that comes  
in stealth  
to overwhelm the heart with  
sweetness  
and leave us with the  
knowledge of the love that  
holds us  
and goes on holding us  
however we pray  
or forget to pray.

