

The simplest prayer you can pray for people who have yet to follow Christ is for them to see who Jesus really is. Use the first phrases of the book of Hebrews as a template of praise-filled prayers. Which of the seven excellencies of Jesus might God reveal first to the people for whom you are praying?

1. The final word of the Son, the ultimate revelation of God (vs 1-2)

God reveals Himself in many ways. But the finest and the fullest way of revealing Himself is through the words and life of Jesus. Pray that the voice of Jesus will be heard clearly, surpassing all competing claims to truth.

Hebrews 1:1-2

¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

2. The preeminent worthiness of Jesus, the creator and entrusted heir of all (vs 2)

Not only was the earth formed by the creative genius of Jesus, God has already put Jesus in charge of the transformed glory of the new heavens and earth that is to come. Pray that God will reveal Jesus as the one who will fulfill God's intended destiny for all things. Pray for people to recognize how trustworthy Jesus is to rescue them, to renew them and to give leadership to their lives.

Hebrews 1:3a

³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power....

3. The bright splendor of Jesus, the radiance of God's glory (vs 3)

Only in the person of Christ can humanity perceive the radiant brilliance of God. Pray for God to disclose something of the weight of Christ's unique beauty, thus awakening a genuine desire to know God.

4. The virtuous character of Jesus, the representation of God's nature (vs 3)

Jesus carries all of the fullness of God's character. He conveys every virtue of God's nature. Pray that God will show how good He really is by revealing the moral excellence of Jesus.

5. The upholding strength of Jesus, the word of God's power (vs 3)

Christ maintains the entire created order. His great power supports those He loves with His encouraging word. Ask God to reveal the tender, sustaining strength of Christ.

Hebrews 1:3b-4

³ ...When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

6. The forgiving work of Jesus, the purification of sins (vs 3)

Thank God for making provision for our sins to be wiped clean. Ask Him to reveal the great value of being freed from the horror of sin and the great cost that Jesus paid to bring about that forgiveness.

7. The supreme magnificence of Jesus, at the right hand of God (vs 3-4)

Jesus is enthroned in everlasting glory beyond and above our sight. He alone is fully God and fully human. Ask God to reveal something of the singular magnificence of Jesus as He is celebrated in heavenly realms.

It's actually very rare that someone rejects Jesus for who He really is. Usually people turn away from God, and with Him Jesus, because they were told something false about God. Discussions about God and His nature are worth having, because it can be helpful to attempt to correct wrong or fraudulent ideas about God. But even though such conversations are worthwhile, they rarely end up persuading anyone. What is most critical is that people recognize who Jesus is, what He said, and what He is now doing. That kind of encounter is worth praying for.

One marvelous way to pray for someone is to offer up expressions of praise to the Lord Jesus that celebrate the very things that we want our friends to eventually know for themselves. Somehow praising God in specific ways makes it easier to believe that others will know Him in the same ways. This session of prayer calls our attention to some of the breathtaking beauties of Jesus. Your praise can become your best prayer!

God's best expression.

Open the session with a brief discussion about the first verse of the book of Hebrews. God has spoken in all kinds of ways to people. God's utmost expression is Jesus. We may imagine that people would give themselves to God without hesitation if miracles were done right before their eyes. But the reality is that God's best statement of what people need to know of Him is Jesus. He is God's best and final expression. Miracles may gather attention. But encountering and following Jesus is the point.

Pray for God's revelation.

Here's a simple way to guide a prayer group through seven rounds of praise and prayer.

1. **Read the text.** Have the entire group read Hebrews 1:1-4 out loud together from the same translation. The point is not to pray through the seven points in the prayer guide, but rather to praise your way through the Hebrews text together.
2. **Direct praise toward the person of Jesus.** Then guide the people in the prayer group to offer their own impromptu expressions of praise that spring from the text. If it helps, welcome people to restate each of the seven different "excellencies" that are listed in the prayer guide with praise-prayers such as, "Lord Jesus, You represent God's patience perfectly," (from vs 3). Or, "God has put You in charge of the planet. We can trust You with our lives" (from vs 2).
3. **Direct prayer to the Father to reveal Jesus.** Then pause and ask that participants select one of the seven items to use as a launching point to pray for some person or persons who have yet to follow Christ. Invite them to pray in smaller groups, one-by-one, or all together at the same time.

Express your faith together.

Go back to verse one and close the session with a simple word of praise, that God is a God who speaks and who desires to be known. Thank Him for already speaking to the people you are praying for in the person of Jesus. Thank Him with expectancy for how He will continue to speak in the person of Jesus.