



B R I A N A
S A U S S Y

Blessing Ways

BLESSING WAYS

by Briana Saussy



When it comes to prayer and blessing I have a very simple philosophy:

Be blessed, and be a blessing in turn.

The question I have been asked the most in 2014 is....how do I pray?

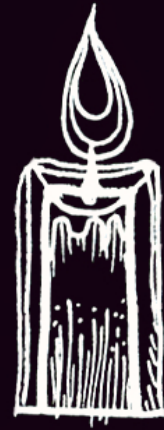
When I first heard this question it broke my heart. How could we not know how to pray for ourselves, our loved ones, how could so many of us not know how to give and receive blessing?

The more I thought about it though, the more sense it made. There are a lot of bad ideas out there when it comes to prayer and blessing.

How do I pray? How do **you** pray?

I hope this class will help you answer that question, and even more importantly, I hope it will inspire you to create your own prayers.

What is prayer and
BLESSING?



Let's start with what they aren't.

Prayer and Blessing are not:

- ✧ Found in any one specific religion.
- ✧ Used to control or coerce others.
- ✧ Performed in order to make you feel guilty, ashamed, or unworthy.
- ✧ Motivated by greed and selfishness.
- ✧ Formal in language, posture, and delivery.

So then...what is prayer? What is blessing?

Those who have been with me awhile know that I like to begin with the actual roots of words, as they tell us so much.

Prayer comes from the Latin word *precaria*, meaning: obtained by entreaty.

Blessing comes from the Old English *blod*, meaning: marked in or marked by blood.

In common usage today I typically hear prayer defined as the act of seeking blessing and blessing as the result of prayer.

But I think we can do better:

*“The function of prayer is not to influence God,
but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.”*

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

*“But listen to me. For one moment
quit being sad. Hear blessings
dropping their blossoms around you.”*

RUMI

- ✧ Prayer focuses us and roots us in the here and now.
- ✧ Prayer and the act of blessing allows us to gain an aerial viewpoint.
- ✧ Prayer embraces and helps us explore paradoxical situations.
- ✧ Prayer and blessing are occasions for witnessing the soul at work.
- ✧ Prayer is an occasion for greater attention.
- ✧ Blessing as an opportunity for more love.

Think about these aspects of prayer. Do you already have practices in place that help you gain an aerial view point or unpack a paradoxical situation? Chances are you do. What would happen if you started thinking about those practices as prayers?

*“There are thoughts which are prayers.
There are moments when, whatever the posture of the body,
the soul is on its knees.”*

VICTOR HUGO

So now that we know what prayer and blessings are (and what they aren't), we can ask the BIG question, the one behind this class: how do I pray?

how do

WE PRAY?



Humans.

Like most creatures we eat, sleep, play, mate, raise young, and...pray?

Prayer is a natural state.

When little children are first taught to pray in many societies they are told to: sit still, fold your hands, bow your head, be quiet. Thus is born a belief that we must be other than ourselves to enter into prayer. Nothing could be further from the truth.

If you leave this class with nothing else, leave with this: **prayer is a natural state;**
it is THE natural state of our hearts, souls, minds, and bodies.

A couple of years ago I was asked to write about prayer, here were some of my thoughts:
Sit quietly. Sway to your own heart beat, or stand and dance before the Lord like King David.
Circle with three friends or let your cat sleep on your lap while you stroke her head. Pray out
loud, quietly, or sit in silence. There is no wrong way to pray.

*“The world is holy. We are holy. All life is holy.
Daily prayers are delivered on the lips of breaking waves,
the whisperings of grasses, the shimmering of leaves.”*

TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS

The question I am always asked is *how* do I pray, but we would do better to ask ourselves...

When do we not pray?

In case you need a list, here are some traditional ways to pray.

They are found throughout the world, in many spiritual traditions and religions.

<i>drumming</i>	<i>holding and rhythmically moving beads, knots, or fringe through your fingers</i>	<i>rhythmically rocking back and forth while seated or standing</i>
<i>rattling</i>	<i>honoring the Elders</i>	<i>watering plants</i>
<i>dancing</i>	<i>reciting holy scripture</i>	<i>planting seeds</i>
<i>chanting</i>	<i>reciting sacred poems</i>	<i>harvesting food</i>
<i>singing</i>	<i>reciting songs</i>	<i>writing</i>
<i>laughing</i>	<i>playing music</i>	<i>reading sacred scripture</i>
<i>clapping</i>	<i>walking deliberately</i>	<i>reading creation stories</i>
<i>stomping</i>	<i>feeding the hungry</i>	<i>reading epics and hero tales</i>
<i>storytelling</i>	<i>holding the lonely</i>	<i>reading poetry</i>
<i>being still</i>	<i>speaking with kindness</i>	<i>dreaming and knowing your dreams</i>
<i>tracing a pattern</i>	<i>touching with care</i>	<i>lighting candles</i>
<i>creating a design</i>	<i>sewing/needlecraft/weaving</i>	<i>censing with incense</i>
<i>painting</i>	<i>caring for animals</i>	<i>anointing with oil or blessed water</i>
<i>drawing</i>	<i>playing with children</i>	<i>bathing</i>
<i>building a shrine or altar</i>	<i>making offerings</i>	<i>baptism</i>

This is good news for those of you who wrote to me telling me that you want more prayer and blessing in your lives, by the way, it means that chances are, you are already a prayerful person, you just didn't know it!

And yet... many of us feel a decided lack of the holy, the prayerful, the Divine in our lives. We long for Blessing Ways, not just occasionally or sometimes but all of the time.

Prayer and blessing are things we are doing, but we don't feel like we are doing them – why?

The snag is lack of intention and in many cases, lack of rhythm.

Many who feel an absence of prayer and blessing are actually feeling a lack of intention.

This is why many, many prayers, even prayers that come from traditions that typically do not hold verbal speech in high regard, involve words. Words wield great power and much of that power has to do with how words can set our intention so that we have a North Star to follow.

One of the easiest ways to consciously pray is to set an intention and then pray by whatever ways and means are beautiful and allow you to feel the presence of the Divine.

The other issue, lack of rhythm is best addressed by creating and committing to a daily practice.

A DAILY PRACTICE

of Blessing Ways



I define a daily practice as something(s) you do every day as an act of intentional, conscious devotion.

It all comes down to rhythm. When we keep a daily practice we provide our lives with a flow and form that would otherwise be lacking. The question is... how can prayer play a part in such a practice?

Pick a few key times during your day and affirm your desire to honor them in blessing.

Possibilities that work for many include:

- ✧ Blessing of the Morning/New Day
- ✧ Blessing of the Body
- ✧ Blessing of Food
- ✧ Blessing of the Evening/End of Day
- ✧ Blessing of the home
- ✧ A prayer for clarity

Set Your

INTENTION



I have a prayer within me.

It is for:

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because:

A light orange horizontal bar intended for writing the reason for the prayer.

This prayer is created in love, delivered in hope, and sealed in beauty.

Blessing for the
NEW DAY



Beautiful moon, thank you for:

Blessed sleep, I am grateful to you because:

It is now time to greet the sun and the new day it heralds.

Radiant sun, be with me today as I

As you grow and strengthen throughout the morning may I also grow and strengthen in the following:

Amen/So may it be/And so it is

Blessing of
THE BODY



Blessed body, every day you make _____ possible; thank you.

Blessed body, you are beautiful, strong, and sacred because

As I go through my day, may I be especially aware of this (part/aspect/need of my body:

May I be wise enough to give you the right kinds of nourishment, care, and rest, especially:

Whenever I become critical or ungrateful remind me in kind and gentle ways, all you do, all you are, and the miracle of your form.

Blessed body, every day you make _____ possible; *thank you.*

Blessing of
FOOD



Blessed be the sun that shines, the wind that blows, the water that nourishes, and the earth that makes possible this food.

We are grateful for this nourishment because:

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As we eat this meal we commit to:

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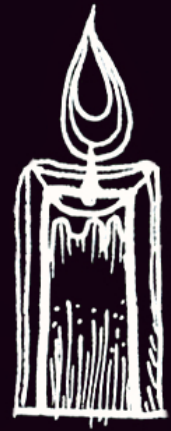
As we dine together may we remember:

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Amen/May it be/So it is

Blessing for the

END OF DAY



Radiant sun, thank you for:

Blank space for writing a response to the sun blessing.

Blessed daytime work/play/activities, I am grateful to you because:

Blank space for writing a response to the daytime work/play/activities blessing.

It is now time to become quiet, honoring the moon and the drawing close of night.

Beautiful moon, be with me throughout this night as I

Blank space for writing a response to the moon blessing.

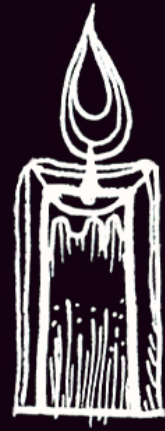
As you grow and strengthen in the starry sky, may I also grow and strengthen in

Blank space for writing a response to the starry sky blessing.

Amen/So may it be/And so it is

Blessing of

THE HOME



May this space be blessed.

May the elements that I/we honor most in our home:

continue to support us throughout our days and nights.

May the gathering spaces of this home be honored and full of:

May the unseen places of this home be acknowledged and graced with:

May there be protection for all who dwell within.

May all who enter come in love and depart in peace.

Amen/So may it be/And so it is

Blessing for

CHARITY



Blessed One(s), thank you for this day. Thank you for the earth beneath my feet and for the sky above my head.

Thank you for the breathing running through my body and the blood dancing through my veins.

I ask that you give me eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart that knows that right path to follow with wisdom and discernment.

May I do what I say I will. May I say what is best and true always. My all actions be done with integrity and love.

Amen/So it is/May it be so.



About the Author

Hi, I'm Briana Saussy.

I teach, write, and speak about the sacred arts.

I want to live in a world where people listen to trees, really look at the stars, and care for all creatures.

A world where all voices are heard and we remember that the overlooked, unseen, and forgotten often hold the greatest knowing.

A world where kisses are deep, prayers are true, and we all strive to do our best work today because tomorrow is not guaranteed.

I want to live in a world where we expect the impossible; every single day.

Where we are fiercely devoted to beauty and blessedness...in ourselves and in one other.

That is my world.

Please share it with me.

love, magic & miracles,

Briana Saussy

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