

**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  
towards 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 kind 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 every day 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 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.

*Joy Cowley*