

Do not be verbose when you pray

Patristic reading

Loquacity in prayer often distracts the mind and leads to phantasy, whereas brevity makes for concentration.

Do not be over-sophisticated in the words you use when praying, because the simple and unadorned lisping of children has often won the heart of their Heavenly Father (cf. Mt 6:9).

Do not try to be verbose when you pray (cf. Mt 6:7), lest your mind be distracted in searching for words. One word of the publican propitiated God (cf. Lk 18:13), and one cry of faith saved the thief (cf. Lk 23:42-43). Loquacity in prayer often distracts the mind and leads to phantasy, whereas brevity makes for concentration. If you feel sweetness or compunction at some word of your prayer, dwell on it; for then our guardian angel is praying with us.

John Climacus, *The Ladder XXVIII,8-10*