

“Praying Hands” by Albrecht Durer (1472-1528)



You may be familiar with this artwork, but you may not have heard the story behind it. When Albrecht was young, he and his friend Franz were studying to be artists while both were working long hours at other jobs. Rather than both failing at their art studies, they decided one should work while the other attended school. Franz agreed to work as a laborer, while Albrecht pursued his art career. He promised to return the favor once he became successful.

Finally, Albrecht began to achieve fame. He returned to keep his promise to his friend but realized that the manual labor had been hard on Franz. His fingers were too bent and twisted to manipulate a paintbrush. One night, as Franz knelt in prayer, Albrecht sketched the crippled hands of the friend who had made his own success possible. This famous portrait of the hands folded in prayer is a tribute to the spirit of love and sacrifice of his friend Franz.

Jesus Christ folded His hands in prayer for us and then opened them up to be pierced on the Cross for our Salvation.

Note: Taken from material by Joseph Stowell in the September 2003 “Today in the Word” Devotional.