

Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship. This type of prayer is a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Him.

This is a peaceful non-violet prayer.

Centering Prayer is based on the wisdom saying of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:6): *“If you want to pray, enter your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”* Notice that *“Father”* refers to a personal relationship, whether you call it father, mother, brother, soul-friend, spouse or anything else.

This prayer is not about producing / doing. It's more about taking away obstacles by providing an interior environment, a quiet space where the Spirit can speak, giving you awareness without words in the inmost depths of your being.

1. CHOOSE

Choose a sacred word, symbol, or text as your intention, to give as a focus to God's presence and action within.

2. ENTER YOUR ROOM

Sitting comfortably and quietly, let your soul enter your 'inner room', which is symbolised by the heart in most traditions; that is, your innermost self beyond the senses and beyond thinking...

3. CLOSE THE DOOR

'Close the door', symbolises your intention to let go of all thoughts, preoccupations, memories and plans during this time. When you engage with your thoughts hold them like a symphony, let it play, in and out, but keep returning your thoughts gently to your choice as in #1, letting go of all thinking. You can do this in a very simple and extremely gentle way, like saying a sacred word briefly, noticing your breath, or turning to God with a brief glance of faith in God's presence.

4. GIVE THANKS

Give thanks to God for being with you, working in you and revealing love and life in you.

5. REMAIN

At the end of the prayer time remain in silence (30 seconds'ish at first, then as you build up your practice remain in silence for a couple of minutes). Gently breathing in love and breathing out gratitude. Perhaps slowly say the Our Father over two minutes.

The steps mentioned are guidelines and can be adapted to suit you. The importance thing is to start to create a practice / habit of this prayer. Start small and give it time. Be kind to yourself, loose your expectations. Open up. Relax. Over time you will build your practice and become able to listen more and more deeply.

Quote

“Silence is God's first language; everything else is a poor translation.”

~ Thomas Keating, *Invitation to Love: The Way of Christian Contemplation*

“Somewhere in those depths of silence I came upon my first experiences of God as a loving presence that was always near, and prayer as a simple trust in that presence.”

~ Cynthia Bourgeault, *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*

Resources:

Read a reflection:

<https://cac.org/centering-prayer-2018-12-12>

Watch a video:

The method of centering prayer (Thomas Keating)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FWvxwfn_CE&t=120s

Centering Prayer practice (Cynthia Bourgeault):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LaaA5hJAloc>

Use an App:

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-mobile-app/>

(search the app store for other App's too)

Useful Website:

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-method/>

Note: The text above is adapted from these resources and my own prayer

~ Jane Maisey