

Putting it into practice

While we don't want the Centering Prayer to become a burden, we do want to choose to participate in this practice at least once a week.

Here are some ideas that some people have found to be helpful.

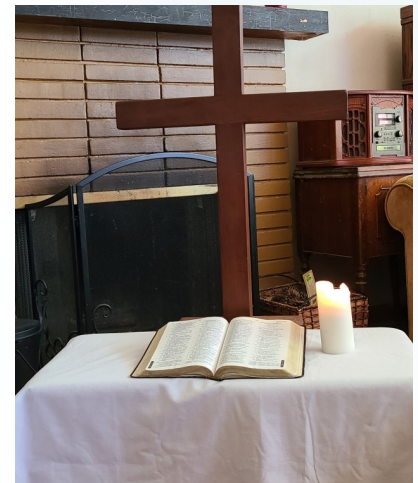
1. Choose a quiet place where distractions are limited.
2. After you have finished, write down in a journal your physical and spiritual responses to the time you spent in prayer.
3. At the end of the week, look back at what you have written, asking God to continue to speak to you through His Presence.

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Spiritual Practice: Centering Prayer



*God's love living in me,
around me, and through me*



What is the Centering Prayer

The Centering Prayer is a practice I can use in my own times of quiet. The “goal” of the prayer is simple – to recognize that I am in the Presence of God. The goal is not to get. I’m not looking for an answer to prayer. I’m not seeking wisdom regarding a particular need. The goal is to be, to exist within, to be aware of the Presence of God. .

How do we participate in this practice?

Basil Pennington a Trappist monk, made this simple for those of us who are just beginning:

1. Sit comfortably with your eyes closed, relax, and quiet yourself. Be in love and faith to God.
2. Choose a sacred word that best supports your sincere intention to be in the Lord's presence and open to His divine action within you (i.e. "Jesus", "Lord," "God," "Savior," "Abba," "Divine," "Shalom," "Spirit," "Love," etc.).
3. Let that word be gently present as your symbol of your sincere intention to be in the Lord's presence and open to His divine action within you. (Thomas Keating advises that the word remain unspoken.)
4. Whenever you become aware of anything (thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, associations, etc.), simply return to your sacred word, your anchor.

Someone said that each time one’s mind wanders is an opportunity to choose to refocus on the Presence of God. Take a minute. Take two minutes. Take five minutes. Stay as long as you can stay. Stay as long as you will stay. Stay as long as God wills you to stay.

Why should we practice The Centering Prayer?

The Presence of God is a Sacred place. What do you think of when you think of sacred? To be sacred is to be “holy.” Set apart for holy use.

Our society calls us to walk away from the sacred – to ridicule it – to live in the profane. It assigns to the sacred little or no value.

God does not agree. God is found, not in the profane, but in the sacred. Therefore, the question must be asked: Am I willing to remove myself from the surrounding profanity and enter into the sacred?

The Centering Prayer removes me from conscious thought of the profane and guides me into the presence of the sacred.

The purpose of this practice, according to Thomas Keating, is simply to consent to God’s Presence and action during [this] time of prayer. Our expectations end with anything more than being in the Presence of God. This is simply a means of experiencing that Presence..