

# Centering Prayer

God has given me everything  
Forgiven me everything  
Promised me everything  
And I lack nothing  
Except the faith to believe it

*Martin Luther*

Meditation is a spiritual word and Christian meditation has been around since Jesus walked the earth. Many times in scripture we see Jesus going off by Himself to be alone in prayer & thought with His Heavenly Father. Meditation is an awaking of our inner self and seeking a holy oneness with God through the Holy Spirit. To meditate is to exercise the mind. But it involves not only the mind but also our whole being, our mind, our heart, our soul, and our spirit.

{ I Thessalonians 5:23-25 }

Centering prayer can be traced back to the very beginning of Christianity and was widely used by the early Church Fathers and the mystics. Random House Dictionary defines a mystic as *a person seeking a direct, intimate union of the soul & spirit with God through contemplation, love, & prayer.* This form of prayer trusts the direct & immediate availability of God, the indwelling Christ, who is nearer than our own heartbeat!

Contemplative prayer is the full opening of our mind, heart, body, and soul – our whole being – to the Living Spirit of God, the ultimate mystery, utterly beyond thoughts, words, images, and emotions. We open our awareness to our God who is dwelling within us – closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing, closer than consciousness itself. Centering prayer is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer, it simply puts other kinds of prayer into a new and fuller perspective. Within the silence of centering prayer we consent to the power of God's presence and the unconditional love of Christ working within us!

The following steps are guidelines & suggestions. Prayer is always and first your time with Christ. Find what works best for you and you are the most comfortable with. We all experience God in different ways and there are no wrong ways to pray. The focus is God, through Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit! As you begin to study and practice centering prayer, set aside a part of everyday for formal meditation.

{ Joshua 1:8 }

- i. Find a quiet & comfortable place where you will not be disturbed
- ii. Quiet yourself { take a few deep breaths & relax }
- iii. Clear your mind
- iv. Take a moment to confess your sins, do a little “house cleaning”
  - a. Read Psalm 51
  - b. Claim the forgiveness freely offered us in Jesus
  - c. Humbly go before God as a servant of the Cross
- v. Clear your mind again ~ think on God, the Cross, on Christ’s love
- vi. Offer a prayer for God’s presence & guidance from the Holy Spirit
- vii. Relax – trust in God – seek God – desire God { Matthew 6:33 }
  - a. Story of the prodigal son – his contemplation in the pigpen – he sought a return to his father’s house – this is the starting point of our journey – where we must always begin. Luke 15
- viii. Contemplate God’s awesome love for you – think about how much you are loved – God’s desire for YOU – the arms of Christ reaching out to you
- ix. Seek to be one spirit with God the Father { I Corinthians 6: 17 }
- x. Always end with a “LISTENING”
- xi. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving, seal your time with God in prayer & adoration – praise your Lord & Savior who is worthy to be praised!

## “palms up – palms down”

Mystics of the Middle Ages called this “re-collection”. The Quakers call it “centering down”

- 1) **Begin by placing your palms face down as a symbolic indication of your desire to turn over any concern you may have to God**
  - a. *“Lord, I give to you.....”*
  - b. *“Father God I release to you.....”*
  - c. *“Abba Father I surrender to you.....”*
- 2) **Then turn your palms up as a symbol of your desire to receive from the Lord**
  - a. *“Lord I would like to receive.....”*
  - b. *“God Almighty, fill me with.....”*
- 3) **Finish by spending a few moments in complete silence, allow God to commune with you, to love you, to embrace you, to hold you.**