

CENTERING PRAYER

A PRAYER OF CONSENT

Adapted from Contemplative Outreach by Jessica Louwerse for Reclaim

ROMANS 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (NIV)

THE PRACTICE

- Find a comfortable position where you can be both relaxed and alert. (If helpful, set a timer with a gentle alarm for the amount of time you wish to pray.) Close your eyes gently and take a few deep breaths, allowing your body to settle and your mind to quiet. Remember, this practice invites us to rest in God's presence and open ourselves to His transformative love and power.
- Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your willingness to consent to God's presence and action within you. The word itself isn't sacred, but it represents the sacredness of your intention before God. Examples:
 - Names of God: God, Jesus, Father, Abba, Mother, Lord, Spirit
 - Words that express a desire for communion: Love, peace, faith, trust, grace, mercy, joy, silence, stillness, calm, open, presence, yes, amen
 - Other words: Listen, let go, oneness, holy, glory, thank you, shalom
- Throughout the prayer, whenever you notice your mind wandering or when you become aware of your thoughts (including feelings or physical sensations—anything that captures your focus), return ever so gently to the sacred word as a way of redirecting your focus to God.

Allow yourself to just be in God's presence, knowing you are loved and desired. There is no need to strive for or achieve anything during this time. Simply be present and open to the transforming work of God.
- At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes to be attentive to the silence within you.

REFLECT

- What are your initial reactions to the practice or the experience of the practice?
- What thoughts or emotions came up during the practice?
- Were there any moments that stood out to you?
- Did you encounter any challenges or discomfort during the practice?
- Spend some time contemplating your attentiveness to the silence within you at the end, recycling the questions above.

PRACTICE

- Remember that people have different reactions to this exercise. There is no right or wrong response, only a true one.
- You are invited to practice Centering Prayer regularly. If starting with twenty minutes is a stretch, choose a shorter time period but be open to adding time as you continue to practice.
- This practice may lead you into deeper communion with God and is a pathway to transformation. This practice is also an exercise of your own love and faithfulness to God.

Over time, you may also begin recognizing habitual thought or emotional patterns in your practice as you reflect on your experience. Allow these patterns to deepen your awareness of self before surrendering them to God's renewing grace.

