

Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is a way to help us leave any distractions to one side, and to focus on God's presence with us. It can be used on its own as a way of praying, or as a way to begin a prayer time.

BREATHE - Begin by breathing normally. Sit comfortably enough so that you can be still for a while, but don't get so comfortable that you might fall asleep. If at any point you get distracted, don't be hard on yourself, but instead gently bring your attention back to your prayer.

IMAGINE - Pick one of these 3 ways to centre on God:

1. As you sit, 'close your eyes, and imagine that Jesus has just walked into the room. He smiles at you, a look of recognition on his face, then quietly takes a seat next to you. For a few moments, imagine that Jesus is sitting next to you, patient and waiting to pray.' Could you have a conversation with Jesus? What might he say back?
2. As you sit, close your eyes and 'imagine that you are walking down a staircase that begins in your mind and winds, slowly down to your heart. Take a few moments to imagine walking this staircase, leaving all the many worries and thoughts behind, slowly descending into a secret room or chapel within your heart where God waits to pray with you.'
3. As you sit, paying attention to your breathing, 'imagine the air in the room is filled with God's light and God's love. For the next few minutes just pay attention to your breathing, imagining with each in-breath that you are breathing God's love, and with every out-breath that you are releasing every distraction, every anxiety, every tension and resistance to God.'

STAY OR MOVE ON - You may wish to stay with one of the above exercises, or you may wish to pray with God about something else. Do whatever seems best, knowing that time given to God is *never* wasted.

Excerpts from Mark Yaconelli's *Helping Teenagers to Pray*, London: SPCK 2009, p39f.