

GUIDELINES

The most important thing to remember is that this is a practice. And the reason we practice is so that we can continue to deepen our relationship with God, not so we can perfect the prayer form itself.

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within, perhaps from the reading or another word that connects you to God.
2. Sitting comfortably with straight back and feet on the floor to allow for easy breathing. Then, settle in and silently introduce the sacred word.
3. When the bell sounds, follow the sound into the silence.
4. When engaged with your thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word. If you fall asleep, simply return to prayer when you awaken.
5. When the bell sounds again to end the silence, allow yourself to come slowly back to the space. Remain in silence until the leader invites reflection.
6. Our reflection is a time is for you to notice the fruits of this prayer – what has moved within you and your own experience of opening to God.

RESOURCES

www.contemplativeoutreach.org They also have a free Centering Prayer mobile app

Open Mind, Open Heart: 20th Anniversary Edition (2006) by Thomas Keating

Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self (2013) by Richard Rohr

Desert Banquet: A Year of Wisdom from the Desert Mothers and Fathers (2011) by David G.R. Keller

Essential Writings by David Steindl-Rast (selected by Clare Hallward)

Eternal Echoes: Celtic Reflections on Our Yearning to Belong (1999) by John O’Donohue

CLOSING PRAYER

May we find peace with those we love,
growing together over time.

May we be at peace with ourselves
and with the labors that fill our days.

May we fashion peace in our world
with wisdom and gentle patience.

Blessed are you, God, who blesses us with peace.

Mishkan T’filah, pg 97

FIRST READING PSALMS 62 FROM THE ST. HELENA PSALTER

<p>For God alone my soul in silence waits; * from God comes my salvation.</p> <p>God alone is my rock and my salvation, * my stronghold, so that I shall not be greatly shaken.</p> <p>How long will you assail me to crush me, all of you together, * as if you were a leaning fence, a toppling wall?</p> <p>They seek only to bring me down from my place of honor; * lies are their chief delight.</p> <p>They bless with their lips, * but in their hearts they curse.</p> <p>For God alone my soul in silence waits; * truly, there is my hope.</p> <p>God alone is my rock and my salvation, * my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.</p>	<p>In God is my safety and my honor; * God is my strong rock and my refuge.</p> <p>Put your trust in God always, O people, * pour out your hearts before the One who is our refuge.</p> <p>Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath, * even those of low estate cannot be trusted.</p> <p>On the scales they are lighter than a breath; * all of them together.</p> <p>Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride; * though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.</p> <p>God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, * that power belongs to God.</p> <p>Steadfast love is yours, O God, * for you repay everyone according to their deeds.</p>
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SECOND READING

The Syrian monk Pseudo-Macarius said, “As near as the body is to the soul... so much nearer is God present, to come and open the locked door of our heart and to fill us with heavenly riches... God’s promises cannot deceive, provided we only persevere to the end.”

Pseudo-Macarius learned that God is always present, but we are not always receptive. Our patience and persistence are needed to “open the locked door of our heart.” Abba Evagrius said, “Let us make provisions for protecting this power of our soul by praying to God in our nightly vigils.” The regular pattern of recitation of biblical verses, especially the psalms, was a threshold between the presence of God and the monk’s heart. Here is a vivid description of these vigils, “Then, after having eaten, they sit and listen to the father’s teaching on all the commandments until the first watch of the night. At this point some of them go out into the desert and recite the Scriptures by heart throughout the night. The rest remain where they are and worship God with ceaseless hymnody (recitation of the psalms) until daybreak.

from Desert Banquet by David G.R. Keller (July 25)