

Body Prayer

Julian of Norwich (1342-1416), whose real name has been lost to history, was an anchorite at the Church of St. Julian in Norwich, England. As an anchorite, Julian lived in isolation within the church, and historians speculate she had lost her husband and children to the contagion. She had definitely known illness herself, through an unnamed fever for which last rites were read before she unexpectedly revived. The mystical visions she received while ill later helped her formulate her vision of a forgiving God steeped in the love of the divine feminine, a God quite different from the dark deity most of her contemporaries understandably feared. It was during her illness that she received visions, which she later recorded in *Revelations of Divine Love*.

Julian of Norwich reached her God through body prayer, a form of prayer through movement of her own invention. Through body prayer, we are also open to Presence in a way that is less mediated by the mind (which is, for many of us, the primary conscious filter).

Julian wrote, “The fruit and the purpose of prayer is to be *oned* with and like God in all things.” Take a few minutes to let your heart and mind’s attention sink deeper into your body, to remember your being’s inherent oneness, through these simple words, postures, and intentions (the words are from the Order of Julian’s motto):

AWAIT (hands at waist, cupped up to receive): Await God’s presence, not as you expect, hope, or imagine, but just as it is in this moment.

ALLOW (reach up, hands open): Allow a sense of God’s presence (or not) to come and be what it is, without meeting your expectations.

ACCEPT (hands at heart, cupped towards body): Accept as a gift whatever comes or does not come. Accept that you are not in charge. Accept the infinity of God’s presence, present whether or not you are aware.

ATTEND (hands outstretched, ready to be responsive): Attend to what you are called to, actions that God invites you to from this stance of openness.



Taken from Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation and The Wisdom Daily, Mary Petiet

