

## Pathways to Prayer

### Exploring Different Ways of Praying

A Resource for All



This document contains all the take-home handouts: that accompany the prayer sessions outlines in the Facilitator Handbook.

You are welcome to print as many copies as you need for sessions in your community.

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*...Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road... Luke 24:32*



All of us pray in different ways at different stages of our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow into our relationship with God.

Silence as a discipline is at the heart of all prayer. It plays an essential part in the process and development of spiritual growth throughout the history of the Church. In the 3rd and 4th centuries, the Desert Fathers and Mothers went out to the desert to find silence and solitude and later the discipline of silence and solitude became an essential part of the daily routine in the monastic life.

Today, many retreat houses offer people a place where they can explore and experience the value of silence and solitude. It is, however, important to remember that silence and solitude in this context are not ends in themselves but a means to building and deepening our relationship with God.

#### Exploring further:

**Laird, Martin** (2006) *Into a Silent Land - The practice of Contemplation*. Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.

**O'Rourke, Benignus** (2010) *Finding your Hidden Treasure - The Way of Silent Prayer* Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.

**Retreat Association** Leaflets - Number 3 - *Time to be* and 17 *Finding Silence and Stillness* [www.retreats.org.uk](http://www.retreats.org.uk)

**Skinner, John** (2004) *Sounding the Silence*. Gracewing Publishers



## Listening to God in Silence and Stillness



*God of stillness and creative action  
help me find space  
for quietness today  
that I may discover  
the inner meaning of silence  
and hear your still small voice  
through Christ, in the love of the Spirit.*

It is in silence and stillness that we may  
'hear' God with inner ears:

Blocking out all sounds and activity in this fast paced, noisy world can be a challenge!

The following steps can help you to relax and focus on that silence within.

You can do this whenever and wherever you are - even if you only have a few minutes!

Allow yourself to gently get into it, eventually spending longer periods in silence.

*'Be still and know that I am God'*

Psalm 46:10

[1] Find a quiet place where you're unlikely to be disturbed - a corner of a room, your garden, a church, a park bench, on a train or bus or overlooking the sea...

[2] Find a relaxed, comfortable position in which to pray - many people find sitting upright with both feet on the floor helps relaxation and attentiveness.

[3] Become aware of the sounds around you. Don't try to block them out, just acknowledge them... Remember God's presence in those sounds and the people and activities they stem from... Then let them go...

[4] Become aware of your body. Beginning from the top of your head, work your way down, closing your eyes, relaxing your facial muscles, your shoulders, then your torso, your arms, hands, legs and feet, right down to your toes. Notice the tension go... and enjoy that feeling. Remember God's presence in you, in your body and in your feelings. Remember that you are loved.

[5] Become aware of your breathing. Don't change it, just notice it. Breathing in... breathing out. We need air for life - it's God's gift to us. Remember God's presence in your breathing. As you breathe in accept God's love and life; as you breathe out, let go of anything that is worrying or distracting you, placing it in God's hands... be still with God....

[6] After a time of silence and stillness... resting... receiving... responding to God... gently bring yourself back to the sounds around you.... Move your fingers, toes and limbs and physically return to your day...  
Thank God for your time of prayer and blessing..

In me, O God, You live and move and have your being.

In You, O God, I live and move and have my being.

All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God

Intercessory prayer comes from the Latin word *intercedere*, 'to go between', 'intervene on behalf of another'. In intercessory prayer we plead on the behalf of another person or a particular situation. Intercessory prayer has a long history. In the Old Testament, Moses, Abraham and the prophets plead on the behalf of God's people. In the New Testament, Jesus models intercessory prayer by praying for his disciples. Intercessory prayer plays an important part in the majority of Christian traditions, especially within the context of Sunday Worship. However, it is important to remember that this is only one of many ways of praying, and prolonged moments of repetitive lists of intercessory prayer can sometimes get in the way of a deeper listening place. So a certain balance needs to be found here.

### Book suggestions

**Clements-Jewery, Philip** (2005) *Intercessory Prayer, Modern Theology, Biblical Teaching and Philosophical Thought*. Ashgate Pub. Ltd.

**Hauser, Richard** (2003) *Finding God in Troubled Times*. Loyola Univ Press.

**Prichard, John** (2011) *The Intercessions Handbook*. SPCK Publishing

**Vennard, Jane E.** (1995) *Praying for Friends and Enemies*. Augsburg Fortress.



## Bringing Your Concerns into Prayer



*“Lord, I am here before you...”*

Intercession means simply being with God with particular people or situations in mind.

*“Lord, I am here before you, with ...(name)... on my heart.”*

You only need to mention a person or situation with a real intention to hold them before God. It’s not about rushing through a list, but naming people or situations in loving care.

It doesn’t matter how the thoughts or words come out – the more personal and genuine the language, the better.

Use the simple phrase above if you like, or something like:

*“Circle, Lord, your servant ...(name)... with your healing love...”*

**Talk to God** about your particular concern. After naming the person or describing the situation that is troubling you, be silent – whatever feels right to you.

### Light a candle

You may want to light a candle, remembering Jesus’ words: **“I am the light of the world”** and the person or situation you are praying for. When we light a candle, our prayers become smaller symbols of the One Light of Christ.



### Use a prayer box, prayer board or tree

It may help you to write down the name of the person or the situation you are praying for on the cards provided and place them in a prayer box.

The prayers in the box will not be read out loud, but can be prayed for quietly during a time of collective worship.

However, if you do want other people to know and pray for the particular person or situation you have on your heart, you could pin your prayer on a prayer board or hang on a prayer tree.

When you’re ready, **end your prayer** by saying thank you or using words that are familiar such as the Lord’s Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

'The Review of the Day' – or 'The Examen' as it is sometimes called – is to pause and take time to prayerfully reflect on the events of the day in order to recognise the presence of God in our lives, and asking God to give us the grace to discern the way forward.

To reflect on our daily experiences in prayer is an ancient practice of the Church. However, St Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) gave this reflection a particular structure and the method presented here is adapted from the example as described by Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises.

### Book suggestions

**Gallagher, Timothy** (2006) *The Examen Prayer, Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today*. Crossroad Publishing Company.

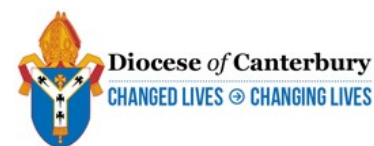
**Lonsdale, David** (2000) *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear, Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*. Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd.

### Websites

[www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen)

[www.beunos.com/prayerexamen.htm](http://www.beunos.com/prayerexamen.htm)

[www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)



## God in my Day

### Review



How and where do we meet  
God in everyday life?



Reviewing your day is a way of becoming more aware of where and how you meet God in everyday life.

It is also a prayerful way to let the day go into God's hands, so that you don't carry your anxieties and frustrations unobserved and unhealed into sleep and into the new day.

This way of reflecting has its origin in the Ignatian tradition and is referred to as 'Examen'.

***"Be still and know that I am God"***

Take a moment or two to find a comfortable position. Don't change your pattern of breathing, just notice that you are, and gently bring your awareness and focus inwards. **Be still.**

### **Transition**

***"You are precious in my eyes and honoured, and I love you."***

You are in the presence of God: in the presence of love. Become aware of that love with which God looks upon you.

### **Give thanks**

Reflect on God's presence in your life today, the kindnesses you've experienced through His love for you, and the things that lifted your spirits – no matter how small. Don't try to remember too hard, just see what emerges, and give thanks to God.

### **Ask God for understanding**

Ask for enlightenment and guidance so that you may understand how God's love has been working with you throughout the day.

### **Review**

With God, review your day. Look for the stirrings in your heart and the thoughts that God has given you this day. Look also for those that have not been from God. Review your choices in response to both and throughout the day in general.

### **Ask for forgiveness and healing**

There may have been moments in your day when you failed to respond to God's love at work in you. Don't judge yourself harshly, just look at that experience and ask for forgiveness, trusting in God's love that removes your heart's burdens, casts out fear and binds up wounds.

### **Renewal**

Bring to God any anxieties you may have about the days ahead, and ask for the gift of what you need most to help you live in accord with God's loving desire for your life. Trust in God.

### **Transition**

Gently bring yourself back to the room and end your prayer by saying thank you or using words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.



All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

God has created each one of us as a unique being, so our way of praying is also unique to each individual. Today, prayer is not only confined to Scripture, as the use of pictures, contemporary readings or poetry is also a way to enter into the experience of prayer. Some of us may find it difficult to pray with too many words and feel drawn towards using art and symbols in our prayer. For others it will be praying through touch, or contemplating a picture, an image, a painting, or an icon. Or we may be drawn to exploring shape and colour in prayer. These different ways of praying can help us to enter into the mystery of God's presence, through the artistic gifts of others. In doing so, we also recognise ourselves as co-creators of God.

### Book suggestions

**Astley, N and Robertson-Pearce, Pamela (eds)** (2007) *Soul Food - nourishing poems for starved minds*. Bloodaxe Books.

**Dickins, Rosie** (2014) *The Usborne Art Book about Colour*. Usborne Publishing.

**Wallace, Sue** (2000) *Multi-Sensory Prayer, over 60 ready-to-use ideas for creative churches and small groups*. Scripture Union Publishing.

### Websites

[www.prayerwindows.com/art-as-a-prayer](http://www.prayerwindows.com/art-as-a-prayer)



## Multi-sensory prayer

### *Prayer using images and symbols*



**Gazing at an image or holding a symbolic object can be a gateway, a portal into contemplation and communion with God.**

As you focus and become absorbed by what it is you have chosen to use, remember it is not the physical attributes that are being worshipped – not the picture, wood, stone or clay itself – but what they represent. Allow yourself to be simply present in the moment, present to God as God is present to you.

### Using an image

**Look through the pictures** provided and choose one that speaks to you the most. **Holding** the picture, rest your eyes on what you see, and relax into it. Let it still you.

**Consider** what is before you. Allow your eyes to travel, then rest where your attention is most drawn. What strikes you in what you see? What do you glimpse of God through it? What are you feeling?

You may want to **try and position yourself in the picture**.

What happens to you as you contemplate your part in it? Does it evoke a memory, an inner image, music, a poem, a song, or a passage of Scripture perhaps?

Does it somehow connect with your life – if so, in what way? Why do you think this might be?

You may find there are things you want to say to God, or sense that God is in some way speaking to you. Pause for a while to listen and talk to God.

When you're ready, gently bring yourself back to the room and **end your prayer** by saying thank you or using words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

### Using prayer stones, a holding cross, or other objects

**Hold** the object in the palm of your hand, cradling and clenching it in turn, then relaxing your hand. **Feel** its weight and texture. **Consider** its story – where it came from: the wind, sun, frost, water and human hands that helped give it its current shape.

**Contemplate** how that story speaks to you; how does it make you feel? Does it remind you of something? What do you glimpse of God through it? Perhaps you want to think about your own story, and what has led you to today. You may find there are things you want to say to God, or sense that God is in some way speaking to you.

**As you hold your cross or stone, know that your yesterday, today and tomorrow are held in the palm of God's hand.**

When you're ready, gently bring yourself back to the room and **end your prayer** by saying thank you or using words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

There is an artist, a poet, a musician in all of us, recognised or not! This is an area where many of us need time to be encouraged to break away from the myths of the past and the inner voice saying 'I can't draw, I can't write, I can't sing.' By freely entering into the experience of the 'creator' within ourselves through the different creative mediums – knowing that we are not going to be judged, don't have to perform, or to produce a result – can be the most liberating experience, leading into a deeper relationship with God, who continues to create through each of his creatures.

This way of praying is often a challenge, letting go of some of the more classical and formal ways of praying, and being prepared to enter into an 'experience' of the creator within ourselves. Trusting and exploring freely with the different creative mediums of paint, clay, free writing and poetry can bring us into a deeper place of prayer, and knowledge of the Creator God.

### Book suggestions

**Bird, Ann** (2003) *Colour me Spiritual*. Foundry Press.

**Julian Merryweather**, Sheila (2003) *Colourful Prayer: A New Way to Pray When Words are Inadequate*. Kevin Mayhew

**Pavitt, Pamela** (2006) *Ideas into Images*. Granary Press.

**Reynolds, Peter** (2004) *The Dot*. Walker Books.



## Multi-sensory prayer

### *Prayer using your own creativity*



**Using our heart and hands to draw, colour, craft or shape is another way in which we can explore the quiet depths of ourselves and bring our feelings before God. We can reveal more of ourselves...to ourselves.**

**Ignore the critical voice** saying you're no good at this sort of thing. Relax into the activity, take time to be still and ask God to guide your heart and hands as you create. Allow your creativity to express what you may have found hard to express in words. Use the pencils, colouring pens, mandalas, playdough or magazines to draw, colour in, cut, paste or sculpt whatever comes to mind.

**Don't worry** about the end result: it is the *process* that matters.

### **A few ideas to get you started**

**Write your name** – or your signature – and look at it from all angles, colouring it and adding symbols if you like. You might want to use the hand you don't normally write with, to make it even more interesting. Or let the pencil or colouring pens wander freely, without any idea in mind what the picture might turn into.

**Try a self-portrait** – Look in the mirror, and study your reflection. What do you really see? Does it tell you something about yourself, about your life? You could even try and draw your face from memory.

**Choose a passage from the Bible** to reflect on, and draw or sculpt whatever comes to mind.

**Look through the magazines** and cut out pictures that speak to you. Use the pictures, glue and paper to make a collage.

**When you have finished** creating your picture, collage or sculpture, look at it carefully ... What can you see? What is it saying to you? How does it make you feel? You may find there are things you want to say to God, or sense that God is in some way speaking to you.

**Feeling stuck?** Just remember you are not being judged on the quality or the content of your artwork. There is no need to rush, no need to feel any concern about the end result. Just enjoy, if anything, the movement and quiet sound of pencil or crayon tracing over paper, the feel of the playdough, the process of *creating* something, regardless of the end result.

When you're ready, gently bring yourself back into the room and **end your prayer** by saying thank you, or using words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

Listening to a piece of music can be especially helpful when settling 'into prayer'. It can calm us down and help to rid ourselves of some of the day's distractions, allowing us to focus more on our relationship with God. Obviously, not all types of music are conducive to entering into prayer. Instrumental music, sung prayer in the Monastic setting and repetitive chants are probably the best choices. Some may prefer well-known hymns. Being open to experiencing and entering into this different approach to prayer will certainly affect the way we pray and how we experience God.

### Book suggestions

**Songs and prayers from Taize** [www.Taizecommunity.com](http://www.Taizecommunity.com)

**Music from the Iona Community** [www.iona.org.uk](http://www.iona.org.uk)

**Fountain of Life –Music for Contemplative Worship –**

Margaret Rizza - good introduction *How can music bring us into deeper prayer.*

**Celtic Hymn Book** – Ray Simpson (pub). Kevin Mayhew. Good introduction to the place of Celtic music/hymn in prayer.

### CDs

Taize Instrumental music - for Guitar . Naïve-Auvidis . Paris.

Margaret Rizza – 'Fire of Love' music for contemplative worship / Kevin Mayhew

Sacred music of John Rutter – and Taverner (various)

Instrumental music of Karl Jenkins (Various)

In search of peace - Teresa Brown (Violin) Devine Music



## Praying with Music



**Music enhances and enriches our prayerful communication with God:**

***“The person who sings, prays twice.”***

*[St Augustine]*

**Choose** a piece of meditative, reflective music.

**Still your mind** – you could use the prayer sheet ‘Listening to God in silence and stillness’ first.

**Play** the piece of music. When it is finished, sit in silence for a little while.

**Then:**

**Play** the same music again.

This time, **listen attentively** to the tempo, rhythm, patterns and melodies.



What thoughts, feelings come to mind?



Does the music say anything about what God is like?



Is God saying anything to me through this music?



Is there anything or anyone I am moved to pray for?

When the music has finished, be still for a while and then gently bring yourself back to the room.

**End your prayer** by saying thank you or using words that are familiar, such as the Lord’s Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.



All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God

‘Lectio Divina’ – or ‘Sacred Reading’ as it is sometimes called – is a specific way of praying with the Bible. In contrast to a Bible study, where we seek the deeper meaning of the text itself, in Lectio Divina we remain with a particular text as a way of encountering the Living Word that can speak to each of us personally at the heart of our lives.

‘Lectio Divina’ as a way of praying is closely associated with the structure of the life of prayer within monasticism. But St Origen referred to this way of reading the Bible already in the 3rd century, long before the monastic tradition emerged. Lectio Divina was formalised by Guigo II, a Carthusian monk who lived in the 12th century. In his book *the Ladder of the Monks*, he explains this way of praying in four steps: lectio (reading), meditation (pondering), oratio (prayer) and contemplation (wondering).

### Book suggestions

**Hayden, Christopher** (2001) *Praying the Scripture -s A Practical Introduction to Lectio Divina*. St Paul's Publishing.

**Valters Paintner, C. and Wynkoop, L.** (2008) *Lectio Divina Contemplative Awakening and Awareness*. Paulist Press.



## Praying with the Bible

### *Lectio Divina – Holy Reading*



**“The Holy Spirit....  
will teach you everything and  
remind you of all I have said to you.”**

John 14.26



**We tend to read the Bible to gain knowledge and inspiration; to find out what we can do with it.**

**There is a way of praying with the Scriptures that can bring us into personal contact with God.**

A slow, meditative reading of a selected passage or psalm, letting the words sink in and even using your imagination to become part of what is being described can be a transforming experience.

This can be difficult at first, so here are some simple steps to help you on your way.

Take a few minutes to get into a relaxed attentiveness.

**Remember** that these words are God's words, and that they speak to you, here and now.

**Read** the passage below slowly, a few words at a time. Read it out loud or in a whisper, but always in rhythm with your breathing, and repeat words or phrases whenever you feel like it.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.  
Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments you will remain in  
my love, just as I have kept my Father's  
commandments and remained in his love.

I have told you this so that my own joy may be in  
you and your joy be complete.

This is my commandment: Love one another as I  
have loved you.

*From the Gospel of St John 15:9-12*

**Linger** wherever you feel drawn or moved by what you have read, or perhaps confused, even disturbed by what the words are saying to you – these feelings are often the springboard for growth, if you can own them and pray with them.

**Respond** to what has moved you: give thanks to God, or share your sadness and confusion; ask for his help, his forgiveness.

Finally, **talk** to God about your thoughts regarding this particular passage – any feelings it has evoked, doubts or concerns that have arisen during prayer time. Be honest. Speak from the heart, as you would with a good friend.

If you find this way of praying quite challenging to begin with, **don't lose hope**: it may just need a little practice, so keep trying, and **share your concerns with God**. As you pray, the Spirit of Jesus will guide and teach you, enabling you to let your present reality meet the reality and truth of the Gospel.

When you're ready, **end your prayer** by saying thank you or using words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

'Imaginative Prayer' or 'Imaginative Contemplation' is frequently associated with St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), as it is one of the suggested ways of praying found in his Spiritual Exercises. But imaginative Prayer was certainly practiced long before the 16th century.

One of the principal methods (forms) of prayer in the Spiritual Exercises is imaginative contemplation/reflection, when we are personally invited to enter fully into the scenes from the Gospels. It has therefore become widely known as Ignatian contemplation. This way of praying with the imagination can be a very effective way of getting to know Jesus more intimately and learning to follow him more closely.

### Book suggestions

**Gallagher, Timothy** (2008) *Meditation and Contemplation, An Ignatian Guide to Praying with Scripture*. Crossroad Publishing Company.

**Lonsdale, David** (2000) *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear, Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*. Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd.

### Websites

[www.pray-as-you-go.org](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org)

[www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)



## Praying with the Bible

### Using your imagination in prayer



**...Glory be to Him  
whose power working within us  
can do infinitely more than we  
can ask or imagine...**

Ephesians 3:20

**In imaginative contemplation we enter into a life event or story passage of Scripture by way of imagination, making use of all our senses.**

**The Spirit of Jesus guides and teaches us, enabling us to let our present reality meet the reality and truth of the Gospel. We become present to the mysteries of Christ's life.**

**Choose** a passage from the Bible e.g.

Matthew 8:23-27 and 14:22-33; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 5:1-11 and 19:1-10; John 4:1-42, 12:1-8 and 21:1-19.

Take a few minutes to get into a relaxed attentiveness.

**Read** the passage a few times to familiarise yourself with it.

**Remember** that these words are God's words, and that they speak to you, here and now.

Put the passage to one side and **imagine** that the events described in the passage are **happening now**, right before you: You see the people, the place, the buildings; you feel the breeze, the sunshine; you hear the sounds, take in the smells and the taste – don't worry about what bubbles to the surface.

**Try and picture yourself** present in that place and time. Take part in what is happening: You are in it, talking to Jesus.

*This is your prayer.* Don't worry if your imagination takes you away from the details of the passage, the historical or geographical facts.

Whatever happens during this contemplation, **spend a little time at the end of it being with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit....**as you would with a good friend: sometimes talking, sometimes listening, sometimes being together in silence.

**Speak from the heart**, simply and honestly.

**Don't lose heart** if you find yourself distracted or unable to imagine. Keep returning to the passage if you need to, gently bringing yourself back to it. **It may need practice!**

If nothing seems to be happening even after several attempts, do stay with it. Speak to God about your feelings. Remember that 'nothing happening' times can also be significant.

When you're ready, **end your prayer** by saying thank you or using words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

We live in a multi-sensory world, where our senses are often overstimulated – even exploited and polluted. In a world where it is ok to ‘feel’ but where ‘touch’ has become a dangerous word. We can taste and savour all of the world’s foods, and are constantly invited to indulge and pamper our bodies with sensuous luxuries. But our senses can also help us to experience God. We were created to see as God sees, to hear as God hears, to touch as God touches, to taste as God tastes: we can reach out to God using our senses. We are invited, like the Psalmist, to “taste and see that God is good.. . to look towards God and be radiant.” (Psalm 33)

Some Biblical texts that can be used for practicing this way of praying:

2 Cor. V: 15; Ecclesiasticus Ch: 16 and 17; Acts 16.

### Book suggestions

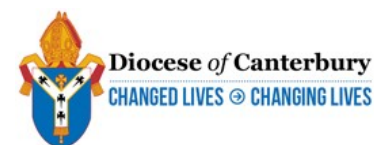
**Booram, B. and Brent, B.** (2012) *Awaken your senses – Exercises for Exploring the Wonder of God*. IVP Books.

**Bristow, Stella** (2006) *Sensing God - Ideas and resources for Creative worship*. Inspire.

**Ferlo, Roger** (2001) *Sensing God – Reading Scripture with all Our Senses*. Cowley Publications.

**Norris, Gunilla** (2011) *Simple Ways – Towards the Sacred*. BlueBridge.

**Richards, Anne** (2007) *Sense making Faith – Body, Spirit, Journey*. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.



## Praying with the Five Senses



**God in everything we see,  
hear, touch, taste and smell**

**We can find God in everything we see,  
hear, touch, smell and even taste.**

**Using our senses can help us realise our  
Lord's presence in everyday life.**

## **Praying with the sense of taste**

*...O taste and see that the Lord is good ... Psalm 34:8*

The sense of taste goes beyond the experience of eating and drinking.

The taste of food and drink can bring back memories of family meals, holidays, school days etc. The taste of a meal cooked for you can speak of love and friendship. Taste can also bring to mind the people, places and processes that have brought our food and drink to our table - whether it has been produced in our garden or transported thousands of miles...

**What have you tasted today?**

**Speak with God for a few moments about these taste experiences.**

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

## Praying with the sense of touch

*She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair.* Luke 7:38

Touching provokes a feeling: a cold stone will make you shiver involuntarily; caressing a flower will give you a sense of its sweetness, its freshness; the clothes we wear have different weights and materials according to the seasons.

Our sense of touch also stimulates our emotions, and can literally touch our heart. When you touch another person, you create a relationship with them.

Take the time to **think about what has been given to you through the sense of touch**. What have I established or reconnected with through touching someone or something?

### **Speak with God for a few moments about these things**

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

## Praying with the sense of sight

*The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.* Psalm 19:1

Everything we see and look at can be an expression of God. The beauty of creation speaks to us of the Creator. The visible reveals to us the invisible.

**Think about what you have received through your eyes in the last few days.** What image has stayed with you? What is your outlook on the world and on other people? What have you seen that you have marvelled at and can give thanks for?

To what or whom have you closed your eyes?

### **Take a few moments to talk about these things with God.**

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

## Praying with the sense of hearing

*...pay attention to how you listen...* Luke 8:18

The world is full of sounds. We hear so much more than just words: voices, creaking, banging, scratching, birdsong, music, and even silence. When we are listening attentively, engaging our whole body, we let God's voice permeate our body and soul.

**How have you listened recently?** What have you heard? What word or sound has stayed in your memory?

For what do you want to give thanks?

To what or whom have you closed your ears?

**Speak with God for a few moments about these things.**

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

## Praying with the sense of smell

*...through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him ...* 2 Corinthians 2:14

Smells can often awaken deep and powerful emotions. They can bring back memories of childhood, people, events and places.

Allow yourself to **revisit one of these smells**; reconnect with this event in your life.

Do you have a favourite smell? A smell that gives you a sense of well-being, helps you to feel relaxed, happy or thoughtful? Focus on one of these smells....

**Talk to God about your experiences.**

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.



All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

Labyrinths are ancient spiritual pathways found across the world and used by church communities at various times since the 4th Century as a path for prayer.

Walking a labyrinth is a way of slowing down and unwinding. It is a space where you can *release* tensions and concerns on the way in, be open to *receiving* the peace and love of God at the centre and *return* uplifted, blessed and renewed.

Labyrinths are being used in churches, schools, hospices, prisons and retreat centres to offer a stilling space in a busy world. They are a way of slowing down... of being thoughtful... of spending time with God.

A labyrinth is different from a maze. A maze is full of dead-ends and designed to get you lost. A labyrinth has only one path that always leads to the centre... if you stay on the path you cannot get lost.

There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth... no set pace... just follow the path in your own time...

Finger labyrinths can be used for prayerful reflection when it is not possible to walk a full-sized labyrinth.

### Further Reading

[www.pilgrimpaths.co.uk](http://www.pilgrimpaths.co.uk) - lots of information, free downloads and the UK place to buy finger labyrinths

Walk and Pray - Vol I and Vol II - printable labyrinth walk leaflets  
[www.pilgrimpaths.co.uk](http://www.pilgrimpaths.co.uk)

Labyrinth; Illuminating the Inner Path - Brian Draper, 2010, published by Lion Hudson

Walking the Labyrinth - Sally Welch, 2010, published by Canterbury Press



## Praying with a Labyrinth



Thus says the Lord:  
Stand at the crossroads, and look,  
and ask for the ancients paths,  
where the good way lies; and walk in it,  
and find rest for your souls...

Jeremiah 6:16

## To walk and pray with the labyrinth :



Allow yourself to become still and settled and then gently pray:

Almighty God, I am always in your presence.

Lead me in your paths of truth and life.

Help me to know you more deeply and learn your ways of love.

I ask this through your son, Jesus Christ, my friend and brother.

Amen.

When you are ready... approach the entrance to the labyrinth, enter and open your heart and mind to God in prayer...

Let your thoughts flow...

Jesus is with you every step of the way, you are never alone. You are always loved by God.

*... you will reveal the path of life to me,  
give me unbounded joy in  
Your presence...*

Psalm 16:11

When you reach the centre... consider your thoughts...  
...pause and spend some time in prayer and reflection receiving God's love and blessing.

When you are ready return along the same path... return gratefully, prayerfully ...

After you exit the labyrinth you may like to take a few moments to write down words or phrases in a notebook to acknowledge and remember this time of prayer.

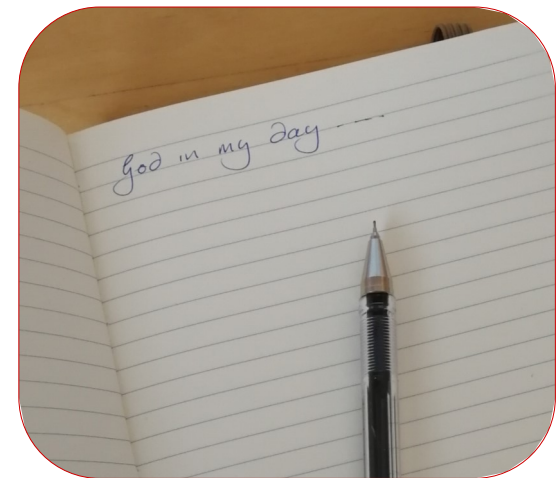
*Finish your time of prayer with praise and thanks to God:*

Ever-loving God I seek always and everywhere give you thanks and praise. May I walk your path of justice, love and humility giving you praise and glory in all that I do....

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and shall be forever. Amen.

*Peace be with you.*

## Review of Prayer



**It can be helpful to keep a notebook in which you jot down a short review of your prayer time.**

**The main purpose of this is:**

It helps to remind you of striking feelings and themes in one prayer time which you may want to return to. It also acts as a guide for the main points you may wish to share with a spiritual companion or prayer friend.

In a further prayer time or 'repetition', always begin by returning to the 'warm spots' and then ask God to enlighten and teach you through the feelings of distance and disturbance.

**What to do:**

After the prayer time take five minutes or so to reflect on the experience, jotting down some reminders under the following headings:

The 'warm spots' – feelings or thoughts bringing some sense of God's closeness – e.g. peace, trust, hope, love...

Any feelings or thoughts that felt negative, disturbing etc. and may have brought a sense of distance from God. These are often springboards for growth if you can own them and pray with them.