



# Introduction to Centering Prayer

*Theme: Letting Go to Let God — A Journey Into Sacred Stillness*

## 1. Opening Reflection

- Scripture: “*Be still and know that I am God.*” (Psalm 46:10 NIV)
- “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matt 6:6 NIV)
- **Reflection:** In a world saturated with noise, activity, and relentless striving, God invites us into a different kind of prayer—one that is rooted **not in performance but in presence**. Psalm 46:10 calls us into stillness, a sacred space where knowing God is not based on **doing but on being**.
- Matthew 6:6 offers us the model of hidden intimacy with the Father. Jesus teaches us to withdraw—to step away from external pressures and enter the secret place. This is a physical act and a spiritual posture: closing the door of distraction and noise and opening the heart to divine presence.
- **Centering Prayer** emerges as a faithful response to this invitation. It is not about saying more but consenting to God’s presence and action within. It is prayer without words, where the soul yields to God in quiet trust.
- **This is not a new practice**—it is deeply rooted in the contemplative tradition (4AD) of the Church. Yet, for believers today, it is a timely and transformative way to reclaim our identity in Christ, allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work we often try to accomplish on our own.

## 2. What Is Centering Prayer?

- Definition: A method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer.
- Origins: Rooted in the ancient Christian contemplative tradition, revived by figures like Thomas Keating.
- Distinction: Not a technique to “get something from God” but a way to consent to God’s presence and action within.

## 3. The Theological Foundation

- Biblical themes: *Abiding in Christ* (John 15), *the indwelling Holy Spirit* (Romans 8), and *silence before God* (Habakkuk 2:20).
- The posture of the heart: surrender, consent, humility.



## 4. The Practice

Centering Prayer is grounded in the intention to **consent to God's presence and action within**. This intention remains central as we integrate elements of *sacred breath* or *sacred touch*—embodied forms of awareness drawn from Positive Intelligence (PQ) that serve not as techniques but as symbols of holy attentiveness.

### Before the Prayer: Prepare Your Inner Space

- Begin with 1–2 minutes of sacred word, or sacred breath, or sacred touch to quiet the body and still the mind.
  - *Sacred word*: Choose a sacred word (e.g., “Love,” “Jesus,” “Abba,” “Peace”) as a symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
  - *Sacred breath*: Gently bring awareness to your inhale and exhale, receiving each breath as a gift from God.
  - *Sacred touch*: Lightly rub your fingertips together with full presence, using the sensation as a gentle invitation to stillness.
- Allow this embodied awareness to lead you into a posture of holy receptivity.

### Entering the Prayer: Consent in Silence

**Affirm your sacred intention:** Consent to God's indwelling presence and transformative action with a simple inward posture of the heart.

1. **Choose a sacred symbol:** Using your sacred word, your sacred breath, or your sacred touch as a symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within. **Intention** is a powerful energy source that shouldn't be taken lightly. Without **intention**, this exercise is not prayer; it is just another mental exercise. This symbol is not a focus but a way of gently returning to God when attention drifts.
2. **Sit comfortably with your eyes closed**, settle briefly and silently, and gently introduce your sacred word as your consent to God's presence and action within.
3. **Rest in silent prayer:** When thoughts arise—whether emotions, images, sensations, or reflections—return ever so gently to your sacred word, or sacred breath or sacred touch as a holy anchor in God's presence.

### After the Prayer: Transition in Peace

- At the end of your 20-minute prayer (or adjusted time), remain in silence with your eyes closed for 2–3 minutes. 20 minutes of prayer twice daily is the recommended rhythm of prayer (adapt as needed for beginners).
- Allow your sacred word, or sacred breath, or sacred touch to accompany your reentry into the present moment, carrying the grace of stillness into your day.

## 5. What Happens in Centering Prayer?

- The prayer of consent: yielding to God's purifying presence.
- Letting go of false attachments and compulsions (link to False Self/Saboteurs if desired).
- Developing interior freedom and spiritual attentiveness.

## 6. Four Aspects of Consent

1. **Consent to Life and Creation** - I am good because I have been **redeemed** by Jesus Christ.
2. **Consent to Growth and Development** - With God's help, **all things** are possible.
3. **Consent to Limitation and Diminishment** - We must **let it all go**; we do not own anything.
4. **Consent to Transformation and Union with God.** - Surrender and **let go**, allow our True Self/Imago Dei to dominate more and more.

## 7. Thoughts

While in prayer, you will experience thoughts, or I should say thoughts will continue to flow from your mind. It's important to realize that this is not a negative thing because it is impossible to stop the flow of thoughts in our minds. By God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can train the mind on what thoughts flow. Thoughts lead to Desires; Desires lead to Passion, and Passion leads to Action- for good or evil. James 1:25

## 8. Three R's of Centering Prayer

1. Resist no thought
2. Retain no thought
3. React to no thought

## 9. Encouragement for Practice

- It's normal to feel distracted.
- The fruit is not in the experience, but in the transformation that occurs over time.
- Centering Prayer complements, not replaces, other forms of prayer.

## 10. Closing Encouragement

- Reflection: *"In returning and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength."* (Isaiah 30:15)



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