

Centering Prayer

A Spiritual Practice for Mental Health

Introduction

During our Walk to Bethlehem, we are tasked with exploring and engaging in spiritual practices. These allow us to practice our faith so that we can love God and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Love our neighbors as ourselves? We must, then, remember to love and care for ourselves!

In this hectic world – full of worries about Covid-19, elections, work, school, and more – it’s important to take time to care for ourselves so that we can in turn care for, and share God’s love with others.

One spiritual practice you may want to try to incorporate into your life is called Centering Prayer. Centering Prayer, developed in 1974, helps you take time to simply be present to the Lord. While Centering Prayer may benefit you spiritually, it may also benefit your mental health! Some studies found “several weeks of daily centering prayer to be associated with decreased anxiety.”

How To

The aim of Centering Prayer is to be present to the Lord, and to consent to God's presence and action during the time of prayer.

1. Choose a sacred word as a symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within. Sacred words are not used as mantras, as in constantly repeating them, but as a reminder of your intention to remain open to silence.
2. Sitting comfortably with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently into the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.
3. When you find yourself engaged with your thoughts, feelings, sensations, images, reflections, simply return to your sacred word, your anchor.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

Share Your Thoughts

What was your sacred word? Has this practice allowed you to see God’s presence in your life? How?

Explore Further

Want more detailed descriptions of centering prayer?

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-method/>

<https://www.contemplative.org/contemplative-practice/centering-prayer/>

Want to try this out with other congregation members?

Suggest centering prayer to your Ignite group!

Want to check out local groups that have ways to engage in contemplation and centering prayer?

<https://eremos.org/north-austin-contemplative-mornings/>

Love Apps?

Check out the Centering Prayer app from Contemplative Outreach to help guide your practice!

Remember to record your spiritual practice at <http://shephills.org/thejourney!> 20 minutes = 1 mile!