

Slowing and Centring

Prayer Tool: Breath Prayer

What?

A breath prayer is a short simple sentence that can be said in one breath, and prayed throughout the day. This prayer tool will help you discover and use breath prayer.

Why?

“Words when they do find their way to the surface from these depths carry with them a whole new power and meaning because they are forged in the caldron of our deepest longings for God.” Ruth Hayley Barton

Bible reference:

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.” Romans 8:26

A quick introduction to Breath Prayer

One of the simplest forms of ‘slowing prayer’ that can bring a profound centeredness to our lives is discovering our breath prayer.

Our breath prayer is discerned in the silence where we learn that the Holy Spirit is our ultimate prayer-guide. Here as we acknowledge and submit to His gentle leadership, we become aware of His movements deep within us forming utterances that are beyond words (Romans 8:26-27), longing to pray through us.

The aim in this type of prayer is that as we consciously and consistently pray our breath prayer it settles inside us in such a way that the word begins to pray itself in us before we are even aware that we actually said the word! Further, when surrounded by fear, overwhelmed by anxiety, or maybe even just bored, this prayer will find us and rise up out of the depths of us revealing a more intimate communion and connection with God.

Centring prayer of this type is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer. Rather, it adds depth of meaning to all types of prayer (1 Tim 2:1-3) and facilitates the movement from our heart to more active modes of prayer – verbal, creative, supplications and intercessions.

We become more effective in verbal prayer because in learning how to rest in God, we have become more attuned to His ways.

Do it: Breath Prayer

As we listen to God in prayer, we may become aware of a word or phrase that comes to the surface. In this type of centring prayer, we don't 'think the word up'; rather we discover it by listening under the leading of the Spirit for something to rise up out of our innermost being.

Sometimes the word or phrase that comes will be a child-like recognition of God's character that feels truest to you in that particular moment or season of life. Other times it could be a phrase from scripture, a word from a song, or a line from some liturgy.

You might simply say the name 'Jesus' and focus on Him until a word comes forth. Brennan Manning encourages a simple process of sitting comfortably in silence and as you inhale, quietly whispering the name "abba" and as you exhale, softly saying, "I belong to you."

In time as you develop in prayer, you will discover your own words rising within you, that capture what your soul is longing for in a particular season.

Books on Breath Prayer

- [The Breath of Life](#) - Ron DelBene