

## Spiritual Practices

# The Divine Dance: Practicing spiritual discipline of prayer

### A Centering Prayer

Do what you need to do to center yourself,  
to bring your awareness into the present moment.

Stretch,

Take a few deep breaths, shift your body position  
until you feel comfortable and awake.

Offer a little prayer of your honest hope for this time.

Look around, notice the view, listen to the sounds, especially background  
sounds. Let your eyes and ears be soft and gentle; just let things be as they are.

Scan softly over your body from head to toe.

Be gently aware of your breathing, noticing how the air flows in and out.

Now notice what interior feelings, thoughts,  
and images you have. Acknowledge them and let them be.

Now, in preparation, gently  
seek your most basic desire in this moment;  
without contriving anything, consecrate your hope.

Now, in whatever way you can, open yourself to

being

in

Love.

Trusting in the goodness and power of Love's presence, let your defenses come  
down and allow yourself to become increasingly vulnerable.

Seek a willingness that is utterly simple and complete, right here, right now.

Just seek to be yourself in whatever may come,  
simply want to trust in love in each moment.

*Adapted from The Awakened Heart by Gerald G. May, (Harper, San Francisco, 1991)*

## What is your VBS Service Project?

Does your congregation need a service  
project for your Vacation Bible School? If so,  
then DHM's Refugee and Immigration Min-  
istries has just the packet available for you.

The Kids to Kids "Fill the Backpack" packet contains informa-  
tion about refugees:

- Stories, Songs, Puzzles, and Games about Refugees;
- Recipes for Food Refugees Eat;
- Bible Stories and Prayers about Refugees.

It also contains information on ways that kids can help refu-  
gees:

- Welcome Cards for Arriving Refugees;
- Backpacks for School;
- Funds to buy School Clothes.

"Fill the Backpack" is available on the Internet at  
[www.discipleshomemissions.org/rim/KidsToKids.asp](http://www.discipleshomemissions.org/rim/KidsToKids.asp) or by contacting  
Bill Culp at (888) 356-2631. ☒



Closeness to God feels more like a dance than a discipline. Our spiri-  
tual relationship with God is an instinctive dance. We know at heart that  
we can keep up with the dance despite all the missteps. By practicing the  
spiritual discipline of prayer, we will be brought closer in relationship  
with God and the dance will become even more divine. Try some of these  
spiritual practices to grow in your dancing with God.

### Spiritual Growth Practices:

**Daily Examen:** Get a journal and at the end of each day answer these 5  
questions: What surprised me today? What inspired me today? What was  
life giving today? What did I learn about myself and God today?

**Silence and Centering prayer:** We can't "microwave our spirituality."  
Be with God in the silence. Not the silence of a graveyard but the silence  
of a garden growing.

**Rolling Sanctuary:** Do you spend a great deal of time in your car doing  
errands and delivering children here and there? You can still find time for  
your own spiritual life. Bring God into the life that you have. Turn off the  
radio, the cell phone and begin to really look at things that might be sym-  
bolic for you. One woman prays for others at every red traffic signal. The  
green light reminds her to do something about what it is she prays about  
at the red lights. At stop signs she prays for herself and places herself in  
God's hands. If she passes a lake or stream she remembers her baptism,  
an ambulance or fire truck goes by and she prays for the people that  
might be involved... you get the idea.

**Preparation Prayer:** Begin each day by planning to intentionally know  
that God is with you throughout the day. Pray through the busyness of  
your day. Ask God to show you the priorities of each day.

**Breath Prayer:** With this prayer as you inhale you address God in a  
meaningful way, as you exhale, you express your deepest desire. For  
example: Inhale -saying "Gracious God"

Exhale - saying "show me the way."

Or,

Inhale - saying "Healing God";

Exhale - saying "heal my spirit."

**A Gratitude Journal:** Gratitude is the heart of prayer. Use a journal to  
write down 5 things each day for which you are thankful. Make them tiny  
detailed things not just the big things. For example: Thank you God for  
letting me walk the dog and see the beautiful sunset today.

*Thanks to Linda Douty, author of **How Can I Let Go If I Don't Know I'm  
Holding On?: Setting Our Souls Free** for sharing these ideas with us.*

*About Linda Douty: Trained in philosophy, comparative religion, and music,  
Douty has completed the Academy for Spiritual Formation (serving in a leader-  
ship capacity) and the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Guidance. Traveling around  
the United States, she juggles her time as a retreat leader, teacher, book reviewer,  
spiritual director, and writer with another favorite vocation-her role as "Lindy"  
to her five grandchildren. She lives in Memphis, Tenn., and writes for several  
publications.*