

Contemplation

sitting with Jesus

INTENT

Simply sit in the presence of Jesus. As we sit in Jesus' presence, we abide in the One who abides in us (John 15:4). We turn our awareness to the God of Love who is with us always. As we sit in Jesus' presence we open ourselves to his grace.

SACRED WORD

A sacred word helps express our willing intent to be present to God. There is nothing magical about the word itself. Using it to express our intent to commune with God gives it a sacred quality. People generally find that one or two-syllable words work well. Examples include names or characteristics of God: Jesus, Father, Mother, Abba, Love, Peace, Shalom.etc.

POSTURE OF PRAYER

Make yourself comfortable – relaxed and yet alert. Feel free to close your eyes or allow your gaze to rest with a soft focus in front of you.

CENTERING DOWN

Our minds can be quite busy and distract us from our intention to simply sit with Jesus. Our breathing can help drop our awareness to a more centered place. Notice your breathing for a moment. Is it slow, fast, shallow, or deep? To drop your awareness down from your mind, take a few deeper belly breaths. Allow your stomach to expand as you inhale and contract when you exhale. You may want to put your hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall. Now draw your awareness to a place that represents the core of your being. It may be somewhere in the centre of your body. Our spiritual ancestors often thought of this place as the heart – the place where Christ resides within us, and where we commune with God. Imagine

your heart expanding and becoming spacious to make room for more of God's presence. You may picture your heart as a flower unfurling, a camera aperture opening, or a pupil dilating to allow more light in.

LISTENING

From this space, simply rest in God's presence. Be open to God speaking to you through your imagination, thoughts, words, or bodily sensations. As you sit in Jesus' presence simply open yourself up to receive his heart for you. Try not to bring rigid expectations to your time of sitting with Jesus. Gifts from God (e.g., Jesus' felt presence, a word, image, etc.) are received not manufactured or grasped. Often, simply sitting in God's quiet presence is the gift received in this time.

DISTRACTIONS

As distracting thoughts flow into your mind (e.g., Did I remember to email Joan?) gently draw your attention back to your intention – to sit with Jesus. View your thoughts as boats floating down the stream of your consciousness. It is natural for thoughts of all kinds to come. Have a friendly attitude towards them. Do not actively resist or fixate on your thoughts. Do not wage war against the boats, or climb aboard. This is a non-violent prayer practice. Simply, detach from them by allowing them to pass by with an "inward smile." Repeat your sacred word, and begin again.

TRANSITION

After a few minutes thank God for the time spent in one another's presence. Take a few deep breaths and when ready bring your awareness back to the room you are in.

Prayer Practice

Morning Centering Prayer

ADDRESS

**Creator God,
Sustaining Son,
Guiding Spirit;**

**You have held us through the night
and raised us from sleep
to the light of this new day.**

**As the day continues,
We acknowledge Your presence.
Our hearts are open to You.**

EPHESIANS 3:14-19

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

INTENTION

**We open our lives to you Lord,
We make space in this day for your coming.
We move from busyness to your stillness.
We open our heart to your love,
We open our ears to your call,
We open our eyes to your presence;
We open our lives to you.¹**

SITTING WITH JESUS

*Take some time to quiet your mind,
and simply sit in the presence of Jesus
who is always with you.
Abide in the One
who abides in you.*

GRATITUDE

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
His mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is Your faithfulness.

This morning we give you thanks.
*Briefly name the things for which
you are grateful.*

And we are grateful, LORD,
for the gift of this day.

**Whatever today brings,
We consecrate to You
our joys and sorrows,
fears and hopes,
pain and gratitude.**

**Here and now we embrace anew
courage and calm,
a life of humility,
and the peacemaking Way of Jesus,
in whose name we pray,**

Amen.²

¹ Adapted from a prayer by David Adam in
A Desert in the Ocean

² We are grateful to GraceTree: An Open Table Baptist Community for sharing their daily prayer liturgy with Cedar Park. Several lines and phrases herein reflect their words.