

UNITY'S FIVE STEP PROCESS TO MEDITATIVE PRAYER

STEP ONE: RELAXATION

"To get still, the body must be relaxed and the mind quieted. Center the attention with: 'There is a quiet place within us all,' and by silently saying over and over, 'peace, be still,' we shall enter that quiet place and a great stillness will pervade our whole being." Jesus Christ Heals, Charles Fillmore, p.80

As we approach our time of communion with God, it is important that we choose a quiet, comfortable physical environment in which to meditate. Once we are seated in a comfortable position, we can begin to relax our bodies and still our minds. We may wish to begin by breathing deeply and speaking the words "peace be still" silently to our muscles and limbs.

It is important that we allow ourselves as much time as we need in order to relax and let go of physical tension. Remember, there is no need to rush. As we continue to relax, we begin gently to release our hold on negative and disturbing thoughts and feelings that we have allowed to make a home in our consciousness.

Charles Fillmore states:

"First we disentangle our thoughts from the flesh and lift our consciousness up to Spirit. We hold them steady in spiritual consciousness until they begin to get hold of Spirit essence, Spirit power, Spirit love." Teach Us to Pray, Charles Fillmore, p. 139

During the process of detaching ourselves from our everyday state of awareness, we seek to peel away limiting ideas about who and what we are until we realize our true nature as spiritual beings.

At this point we may wish to affirm the following statements to help remind us of our true identity: "I have a body, but I am not my body. I am Spirit." "I have thoughts, but I am not my thoughts. I am Spirit." "I have feelings, but I am not my feelings. I am Spirit."

As we continue to acknowledge the truth about ourselves, we become aware of experiencing a greater sense of freedom and receptivity.

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STEP TWO: MEDITATION

"Continuous and contemplative thought; to dwell mentally on anything; realizing the reality of the absolute; a steady effort of the mind to know God." The Revealing Word, Charles Fillmore p. 131

During meditation, we focus our attention on the nature of God and the reality of Divine Ideas.

As we do so, we begin to deny our belief in error thought and affirm the presence and power of God, the Good.

"For example, if we are meditating on the idea of life, we may find it necessary to deny the unreality of illness, weakness, or death. We then begin to affirm the truth that God is life; that He is the Source of all life, and we are heirs to His life, which is eternal. Many other related thoughts may come to us during this meditation period; some we will probably discard, but others we will undoubtedly accept as we ponder their meanings." Foundations of Unity, series 2, vol. 2 p103

In our process of using denials and affirmations, we find ourselves becoming more centered and focused on God. It is then that we become aware of moving into the next step of our process.

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STEP THREE: CONCENTRATION

"Whereas in meditation we have moved ideas in our mind, it is now our mind directly addressing God, as the first step in the divine dialogue." We are making ourselves open and receptive to what will follow 'in the silence' . . . we hold ourselves in singleness of mind or purpose without interference by mixed thinking. It is like holding up an empty cup so that God may fill it with His inspiration. Foundations of Unity, series 2, vol. 2 p104

At this point in our process, we are placing the complete focus of our attention on God. No longer do we experience random thoughts moving through our minds. Instead, we find ourselves deeply and devotedly centered on a phrase or "sacred word" of Truth. For example, we might affirm, "The Father and I are one," "God is love," or any such Truth upon which we are guided to concentrate.

Remember, concentration is never forced or strained. It comes from a profound and grateful awareness of our indwelling presence of God.

Through our time of deep concentration, we become open and receptive to experiencing "the still small voice."

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STEP FOUR: REALIZATION / THE SILENCE

"The purpose of the silence is to still the activity of the individual thought so that the still small voice of God may be heard. For in the silence Spirit speaks Truth to us and just the Truth of which we stand in need." Teach Us to Pray p17

The "still small voice" does not speak in language as we know it, but communicates in a much more profound way. Charles Fillmore states: "Compared with audible language, communion in mind can be said to be without sound. It is the 'still small voice,' the voice that is not a voice, the voice using words that are not words. Yet its language is more definite and certain than that of words and sounds, because it has none of their limitations." Jesus Christ Heals p33

In the silence, our mind is open and receptive to Divine Ideas.

"God 'speaks' to us in the silence in various ways to suit our needs at the time. Sometimes His 'speaking' may be an inner harmonious feeling or a direct inner knowing; it may come as an idea or a definite statement or affirmation; perhaps the words of a beloved hymn or poem or Bible verse suffice to present His answer. There are times when we just have a sense of peace, of well-being. At the core of all these ways is some divine idea that God is revealing to us." Foundations of Unity, series 2, vol. 2 p104

In the silence, we realize our oneness with God. Out of this realization comes a deep sense of joy and gratitude, which leads us to the final step of our process.

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STEP FIVE: THANKSGIVING

"The attitude of thankfulness opens the way for the fulfillment of our righteous desires, for thankfulness is the action of both faith and love-the faith that perceives that good is awaiting our claim, and the love that unifies us with the good we long to manifest in mind, body, and affairs." Foundations of Unity, series 2, vol. 2 p104

When we give thanks in advance of our demonstration, we recognize God as the source of all our good. We continue to experience an expansion of consciousness as we open our minds and hearts to the manifestation of our desire.

"To sum it up: True thanksgiving is knowing the good, seeking the good, speaking only good, expecting only good, and the result of these attitudes is to bring the fulfillment of our righteous desires." Foundations of Unity, series 2, vol. 2 p104

Let us always remember to conclude our time of meditative prayer with a heartfelt "Thank You God!"... and so it is.