



The practice of contemplation – learning to abide

Beacon Parishes Mission Community
Ipplepen with Torbryan, Denbury, Broadhempston and Woodland

Abiding in silent prayer

It is recommended to follow the following practice for 20 minutes twice a day - once in the morning and once in the afternoon / early evening.

1. Choose a sacred word as a symbol of your **intention** to 'abide' e.g. a suitable word could be God or love.
2. Sitting comfortably with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as your symbol of your consent to Gods **presence** and action already abiding in you.
3. When you become aware that you are engaged with thoughts (including body sensations, feelings, images and reflections), **return** ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer time, **remain** in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

Abiding in scripture

Having got ready and identified what passage you will read - light a candle and perhaps say a short prayer as preparation.

1. **Read:** First read the passage noticing the phrases or verses that speak to you.
2. **Reflect:** Read the passage again focusing further on the points that struck you in the first reading.
3. **Respond:** Read the passage a third time and then respond by noting your thoughts in a journal or responding in prayer by having a conversation with God about what you have heard.
4. **Rest:** Finally spend some time in silent prayer following the guidelines above.

Abiding in daily life

Often our daily lives can throw up awkward moments when tensions and emotions are running high. When we feel we are about to be overwhelmed by our reaction to an event or situation how can we abide and use the resources of contemplation? One approach is to use following prayer to focus on that feeling as we experience it physically; then we welcome that reaction (not the cause); we make the act of will to let go of our desire to change the situation using this "Welcome Prayer". Over time we can learn to respond, rather than react, to events; the practice empowers us to take appropriate action as freely and as lovingly as possible in any situation that presents itself in our lives.



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The Welcome Prayer by Mary Mrozowski

1. Become aware:

Gently become aware of your body and your interior state.

2. Welcome:

'Welcome, welcome, welcome.

I welcome everything that comes to me in this moment, because I know it is for my healing.

I welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions, persons, situations, and conditions.'

3. Let go:

'I let go of my desire for security.

I let go of my desire for approval.

I let go of my desire for control.

I let go of my desire to change any situation, condition, person, or myself.'

4. Abide:

'I open to the love and presence of God and the healing action and grace within.'

Digging Deeper

Often in life we focus on the end goal....in this context the fruit of the Christian life listed above and wonder how we can develop and attain them. Rather than focusing on the fruit contemplative practices help us abide and connect more deeply to Christ 'the true vine'. We trust that from this abiding and deeper connection with Christ the fruit will be forthcoming. We trust God for the growth.

The three practices outlined above are as outlined by the Centering prayer movement.

1. For resources around the practice of Centering Prayer as taught by Fr Thomas Keating and those who followed him, see www.contemplativeoutreach.org.uk.
2. 'Open Mind Open Heart' by Thomas Keating introduces the practice of Centering Prayer.
3. Why not get yourself a modern English translation of the 14th Century classic on contemplative prayer 'The Cloud of Unknowing'? Carmen Butcher's new translation of the Cloud of Unknowing and the book of Privy Council is a good place to start.