

## **A5 | Awaken to God's Presence: Finding Calm in the Storm | Breath Prayer**

Project Zion Podcast

Joelle Wight

A gift of peace of troubling times, Project Zion Podcast offers this series of guided practices to help you connect with the Divine, no matter where you are, what's going on around you. Take a deep breath and allow your spirit to find calm in the storm of life.

Katie Harmon-Mclaughlin

Hi, this is Katie Harmon-Mclaughlin with Community of Christ spiritually Formation Ministries. And this week we will be exploring in practicing the spiritual practice of breath prayer. Breath is foundational to so many of the spiritual practices. It is a form of intimate and immediate contact with God who is the source of our life breathing in and through us at all times. Paying attention to our breath is also a natural way to reduce anxiety and find ourselves more present to the moment before us. When we breathe, we remember the gift of life that sustains us without our need to control it, manipulate it or even think about it. Scriptures are full of powerful imagery of breath of God as the source of who we are and as the source of creation. In Job 33:4 we read "The spirit of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."

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There are many ways to practice breath prayer, and as we move through this time of praying, we will engage several. Allow yourself to be drawn to that rhythm of breath that opens you to receptivity to the spirit in your life here and now. As we begin, you are invited to find a comfortable alert posture for prayer, bringing your whole being into this experience, I first noticed your breath. Be an observer, curious and attentive to each inhale and exhale. Let yourself simply be in awe of the gift of life breathing in and through you this day.

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One common way of using our breath in prayer is to find a short phrase from a scripture from a song or something that just feels meaningful to you, allowing that phrase to match the rhythm of your breathing as it slows and deepens. The phrase that we will use to start is "breathe in me breath of God", and so, with each inhale silently repeat to yourself, "breathe in me" and with each exhale "breath of God" Continue in that pattern of breathing for a few moments, letting your focus on the words gradually fall away as you deep in and you're breathing and presence to God. Here and now, with each inhale, breathe in me and each exhale breath of God.

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As you continue to breathe, I now invite you with each inhale to let emerge a word or phrase of what it is this day that you desire to receive and with each exhale, let emerge a word or phrase of what it is this day that you desire to release. So, for example, you might on each inhale love and each exhale fear. Or perhaps you desire to receive calm, connection, Christ, Spirit renewal, hope. With each exhale perhaps anxiety, frustration, control, loneliness. Take a few moments to notice those words or phrases that emerge for you, letting this rhythm of receiving and

releasing being a time of prayer. You may choose the same word or phrase over and over, or you may notice different words and phrases emerging as you practice this rhythm for a few moments with your breath with each inhale. What do you desire to receive this day? Taking it into your whole being and with each exhale, what do you wish to release this day, surrendering and letting it out with your breath.

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Again as you continue to breathe, I now invite you to notice with each inhale what it is that you are invited to see in the world around you and with each exhale a word or phrase of blessing that you wish to share. So, for example, for an inhale, you might say the suffering of others and with each exhale peace and blessing or with each inhale gratitude for creation and with each exhale blessings of well-being. This is an opportunity to let our breath prayer transform our way of seeing and acting in our daily lives, taking into ourselves what is real both in its sorrows and joys and exhaling out as a way of sharing our intentions for healing, wholeness and blessing for all of God's creation. So notice for a few moments those words or phrases that emerge in you and let those words and phrases be a rhythm of connecting you to creation in your own loving gaze in your own desire to bless and share. Talking a few moments now to breathe in the silence, connecting with that rhythm and our breath.

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And finally take another few deep breaths. Notice if anything has shifted or opened in you from the time we began this practice. Until now, notice if you sense an invitation unfolding in you for the way that you will live this day And finally give thanks for our breath the source of our life connecting us to all life on this beautiful planet. May we go about our day engaging in this rhythm of being that happens without our thinking but invites our awareness, intention and gratitude. Amen.