

A7 | Awaken to God's Presence: Finding Calm in the Storm | Centering Prayer
Project Zion Podcast

Joelle Wight

A gift of peace in the midst of troubling times Project Zion Podcast. First, this series of guided practices tell BUE 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 call in the storm of life.

Katie Harmon-Mclaughlin

Hi, this is Katie Harmon-Mclaughlin with Community of Christ Spiritual Formation Ministries, and this week I invite you to join me in the spiritual practice of Centering Prayer. Centering Prayer is a prayer form that invites us into silence and presence with God without the use of words or images in Centering Prayer, were invited to let emerge a prayer word that serves not as a mantra but as an anchor to return us to our intention of continuous presence before the reality of God. Here and now, as God is as we are, it is a prayer of surrender. As Cynthia Bordeaux expresses its an opportunity to exercise our muscle of surrender by continuously returning to our intention to be present before God. Whenever thoughts, feelings or sensations begin to distract us. We are not asked to clear our minds entirely or remove all thoughts, but instead to drop beneath them to go into our own inner depths. The image that is helpful for me is that of a diver going deeper into the water and watching boats pass above on the surface, those boats are our thoughts, feelings and sensations, anything that might capture our attention and bring us back to the surface of life when God's invitation is resting and residing in our depths.

Katie Harmon-Mclaughlin

And so today I invite you to join me in this prayer of simply resting into God's presence in the silence, using your prayer word every time you find yourself distracted. And if you find yourself using your prayer word a lot, that is OK. Lots of opportunities to exercise your muscle of surrender. Our capacity to be present to God in the silence can take time. And so if in these minutes of silence you find your mind wandering or have a hard time settling down, know that that, too, is part of the prayer and that God is with you and everything that is happening. And so as we prepare for this time of prayer, I invite you to hear the words of to Psalms. The first Psalm 46:10. Be still and know that I am God and from Nan C. Merrill's paraphrase of Psalm 107, Enter into the great silence where you may hear the voice of the beloved who satisfies the hungry soul and quenches the thirst e with streams of living water.

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As we prepare for this time of prayer, we will take five minutes in the silence. Today it's often recommended that you work your way up to about 20 minutes in your own practice, but notice what feels right for you as you gradually explore God's invitation to you in the silence. Through this prayer form, I'll invite us to begin by finding a comfortable, alert posture for prayer. If it's helpful, you may choose to close your eyes and draw your attention to your breath, really taking your time here to just notice how you come into this time and place. Letting yourself

gradually quiet can settle within noticing any small space of receptivity opening in you as we gradually crossed the threshold into a time of intentional prayer.

Katie Harmon-Mclaughlin

Notice now a word or short phrase that emerges for you that you will use as your prayer word it could be grace, Christ, peace, presence. Don't worry too much about the meaning it has for you. Let it serve as an anchor. It is simply an opportunity to return you continuously to your intention to be present to God.

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And once you have your word, rest again in the silence, I'll use the singing bowl to open our time of five minutes of silence and also to close it. Remember that if you find yourself distracted to simply return to your word, surrendering continuously to God's presence here and now. If you have lots of thoughts, be gentle with yourself. Sink into your depths and watch them float above on the surface as you stay present to God in that deeper place within.

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Take a few more deep breaths in the silence as we begin to draw this time of prayer to a close.

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Notice if anything has shifted or opened and you through this time of prayer, don't worry too much about having a revelation or insight to carry with you just the simple practice of returning to God as constant presence in all things. Know that you can return to this inner sanctuary of silence whenever you need to. And since the invitation to develop a contemplative prayer form in your life that invites you deeper and deeper into the silence and presence of God again. From Nan Merrill, enter into the great silence where you may hear the voice of the Beloved who satisfies the hungry soul and quenches the thirsty with streams of living water. Amen.