



CREATING  
SPACE

A prayer & contemplation series

PRESENTED BY  
KINGDOM CAUSES BELLFLOWER  
BORROWED FROM THE  
MCGRATH INSTITUTE FOR  
CHURCH LIFE

---

Centering  
Prayer

# Centering Prayer

All contemplative prayer is a way of being with God more intimately and seeking union with God. In centering prayer, we make space for God and invite God into it. Since interior silence is not a strength of our age, centering prayer will take time and patience to learn. Still, if you desire more opportunities simply to be with God or to focus your attention on God, then centering prayer will likely be worth the effort.

## Matthew 6:6

---

“go to your inner room, close  
the door and pray to your  
Father in secret”

## Objective

The fruits of centering prayer do not come during the prayer itself but in our daily life and relationship with God. Thus, one does not enter centering prayer with an objective in mind like attaining a state of thoughtlessness or achieving some spiritual experience. Nor should one seek to analyze or unpack the thoughts that inevitably arise during centering prayer. Instead, the only goal of centering prayer is to be with God. Like an infant gazing into the eyes of its mother, you have nothing to do during centering prayer except to be present to the Other who is God.

# Steps of Centering Prayer

## I. CHOOSE A SACRED WORD

Set aside at least **20 minutes** to practice centering prayer. Choose a word that can draw you into prayer. This word will be like a compass in your hand that helps call you back to interior silence. Because you will return to it often, the shorter and simpler the word, the better. Consider words like Abba, Jesus or mercy.

## II. SIT COMFORTABLY WITH EYES CLOSED

Find a comfortable place where you can sit. You should be poised to receive but not rigid, relaxed but not slouching. Close your eyes as a sign of letting go of the world around you and making yourself available to God. Set your alarm to ring in 20 minutes.

## III. INTRODUCE YOUR WORD

Introduce your word in your mind and let yourself simply be. As thoughts or other distractions arise, call to mind your word (always gently) and let it return you to interior silence. Persist in this state of openness to God until your alarm draws you from prayer.

## IV. WITHDRAW FROM PRAYER

When your alarm alerts you, begin to withdraw from prayer. Thank God for the time spent in prayer

## V. TRUST IN GOD AND IN YOUR PRAYER

It's easy to worry that your centering prayer was a waste of time. Did I do it correctly? Should I have done something else? Why did I get so distracted? When looking back at your centering prayer, keep two things in mind. First, the fruits of centering prayer rarely come in the moment of prayer itself but instead manifest in other areas of life. Second, a session of centering prayer is time set aside to be with God and make ourselves available to him. A child who climbs into a grandparent's lap will delight the grandparent whether the child is perfectly still or constantly squirming. We can have similar confidence that our time in centering prayer delights.