

Meditation on presence

-from Deacon Linda Bobbitt

One morning I was having difficulty praying so I asked God to show me what to do. Following is the prayer God taught me. Perhaps it will be helpful to you too.

Preparation:

Breathe deeply and notice the world around you with all its sights and sounds. Dwell in the moment. When you notice you are thinking *about* things rather than simply experiencing them with your senses (hearing, seeing...), then gently let go of the thoughts and return to your experience. Continue this until your distracting thoughts settle down to a dull roar (it usually takes me about 10 minutes).

Prayer:

Option 1: Simple

Once you are reasonably focused on where you are and your sensations, open your heart and mind to God's presence by repeating the following slowly. Say each petition one at a time and let it hang -allow its reality to sink in. Repeat each petition as necessary until you are present in it – speaking it from your heart with all your mind. Allow God to be present to you through these words.

- Here I am
- You are here
- We are here

Pause after each petition allowing God's presence and your presence to sink into your heart with sighs too deep for words. Enjoy your time with God.

Option 2: Combine with breath prayer

- Here I am (exhale)
- You are here (inhale)
- We are here (both inhale/exhale)

Option 3: Having a clear start/end point can help. You may want to say each petition 10 times or, instead of counting, you may find it helpful to set a timer and continue the meditation until the timer sounds.

Option 4: Visualization. You may find it helpful to use your imagination to focus on each petition. Ask God to share an image for each petition.

Example:

- Here I am – Remember the story of Samuel who heard the Lord and was taught to stand and respond by saying “Here I am Lord”. Put yourself in Samuel's place. Imagine yourself standing or kneeling before God and speak these words to God.
- You are here – Remember the story of Elijah who fled to a cave and heard God – not in the wind or fire, but in the silence. Imagine God's loving presence and gentle smile in the quiet or imagine Jesus standing before you with his arms outstretched.
- We are here – Remember that St. Paul told us nothing can separate us from the love of God. He also said that God is before and behind, above and below, on our left and right. Imagine reaching out in any direction and grasping God or Christ's hands. (It may help to literally lift your arms toward where you notice God.) Then look into his eyes. Stay like that as you repeat the petition.