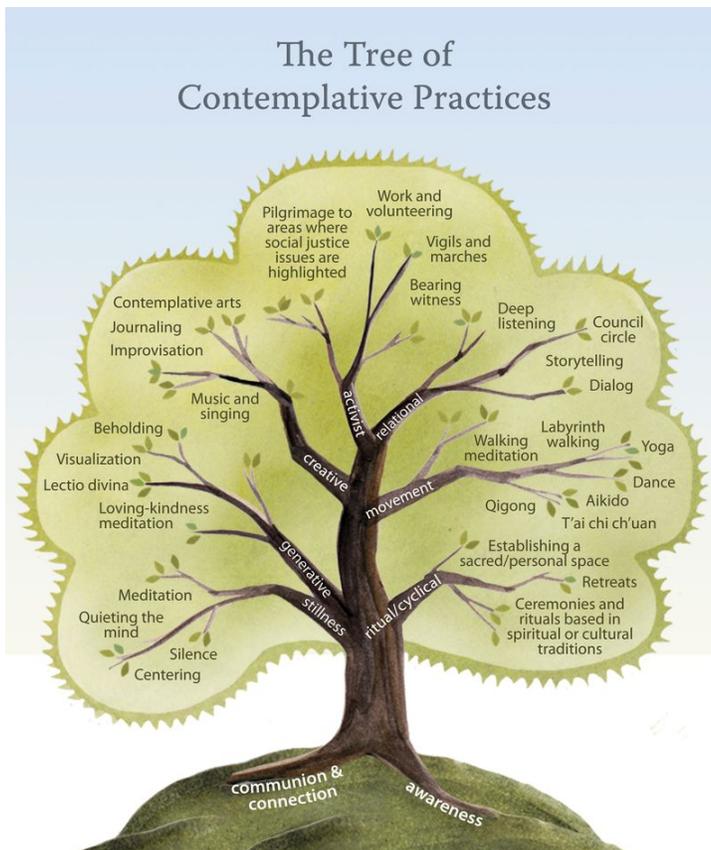


How should we pray?

If we are working toward overall fitness, we need to stretch different parts of our body – arms, legs, core (belly/back). Different kinds of stretches affect different muscles and it is important to stretch the muscles you will use in the exercise.



Likewise, using different kinds of prayer opens you up to new ways God can work with you. God uses these practices to expand your imagination about how God might be calling you to engage in your life and the world around you.



There are many kinds of prayer or spiritual practices. Some appear quiet and passive (e.g. contemplation/meditation). Others are quite active (e.g. singing, dancing, walking). Still others are intellectual (Bible or theological study).

This image of a tree illustrates the seven broad kinds of prayer, each with specific practices.

Consider the kinds of prayer you have tried. Often, we are praying but don't realize it. When we realize we experienced God (e.g. in nature, during exercise or in music), we may not realize that this was not simply good luck.

Engaging in spiritual practices raises our awareness of and deepens our relationship with God. This happens because these practices release our minds from work or worry. Once released, our hearts and minds are more available to notice God who is always with us.

So, think back on the last time you noticed God's presence and consider what you were doing at the time. What kind of practice were you engaged in?

Now, instead of hoping to experience God again someday, consider intentionally engaging a practice and expecting God to show up. The more regularly and intentionally we engage God through these practices, the deeper our relationship with God will grow. We can trust this is true because God promised it was so... "“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” (Matthew 7:7-8)