

## CENTERING PRAYER

11/29/20

Today I'm going to invite you into a way of being with God, called Centering Prayer. A way to center-down and settle into God's presence.

This prayer is often known as the "prayer of the heart, or "simplicity prayer"- it was developed in the mid-1970's - by Trappist Monks and Father Thomas Keating.

On Thanksgiving a couple of days ago, I reached out to a friend, who's husband passed away this year. And I said, "how strange this holiday must be .... with both "gratitude" and "grief" so prominently on the table. And she said, "Yes, I made one of his favorite dishes - and it made me both "proud" and "sad" at the same time.

This year, for soo many of us - has held perhaps more pronounced than ever - these seemingly contradictory states of being, these emotions. It's been a flurry of heartache, relief, of worry and laughter, memories made, and memories that never had a chance to be made... a year of learning and (un)learning.. A year of listening and speaking ... and screaming and sobbing. ...A year of brain-splitting frustration and questions - and a year of paralysis. A year of hate, a year of love, a year of grief, and a year of life. Void of touch and full of screens - held together by a spectrum of distance.

An unforgettable year - an unforgettable year.

**A year that has shaken us, turned us upside down, and left us swirling.**

Our lives are somewhat like a **snow globe** right now - a range and mix of emotions - stirring and falling around us.

In some ways it's beautiful to watch a snow globe - be all shaken up and whirl-windy....

But to be in it - to have your brain, and spirit and heart in that heightened state - **over the stint of many months** - can be agitating, anxiety -provoking, and stressful.

So I want to make space for us to do centering prayer together this morning.

**A way to find God's presence even in the midst of the swirl.**

An invitation to settle into God's calming, grounding love.

To just be with God.

To just be - no verbal words, no gestures - just sitting with God.

As a way to enter into centering prayer, I'd love for you to:

- 1) **Choose a word. A word that you'll return to again and again in your heart during centering prayer.**

Often this is a name for God, or a characteristic of God, or word that you would imagine is helpful for you in the swirl.

Could be: *“Love, Help, Peace, Notice”*.. Why don't you take a moment to land on a word.... You can use this word - to return to center. Where God and you are together. Acts sort of as a windshield wiper, if too many thoughts get piled up on you as you are trying to be with God.

- 2) You will have thoughts in this time of centering prayer - and that's ok. **Centering prayer realizes that thinking is a normal practice of being a human being. As you notice thoughts coming, just notice them - and then “let them go”. It's a bit of a mystery - but worth the practice.**
- 3) You are not a failure if you have 10,000 thoughts - in the next 2 minutes... **you have 10,000 opportunities to return to God.**
- 4) Centering prayer is a pathway of return. So every time we can “let go” of thought is a pathway to return and discover something deeper about yourself and God. Centering prayer invites you to sink your mind into your heart.
- 5) Make yourself comfortable and we will close our eyes together.
- 6) **2 minutes** (stillness - and in silence - settling into God's presence)/

#### **Prayer:**

#### **Psalm 94:18-19**

Whenever we feel our feet slipping, God.

(may) your faithful love steady me, Lord.

*Whenever we feel the flurry of thoughts and emotions start to overtake us,*

*May your grounding love anchor us.*

And when our anxieties multiply,

(may) your comforting calm us down.

**Amen.**