

# MOVING IN THE SPIRIT

In our look at spiritual practices so far we've thought about praying with the words that Jesus gave, and being quiet and still to listen to the Holy Spirit. But sometimes, it's hard to be still or to use words! So it's good that there's also ways to connect with God through moving our bodies.

How do you like to get moving? Do you like to jump rope, or play sports, or swim? I enjoy taking walks and riding my bike, especially on trails in the woods. Lately I've been learning how to do jumps on my bike—even though I'm really probably too old for that sort of thing it's fun learning a new skill and pushing my body to do something new.

Of course, just moving isn't necessarily a spiritual practice. But I do notice that when I'm walking I have time to think without being distracted by other things I have to do, and when I'm riding on trails it takes so much focus that I'm not thinking about anything—just the next ten or twenty feet of tricky terrain ahead. Both of those are good for me! Pastor Brian, who used to be one of the pastors at Reservoir, once talked about how his best prayer times were on long bike rides. For him, that time on his bike came to feel set aside for talking to God and listening to God, and as he put in miles and miles of riding he also came closer to God.

Moving can be part of a spiritual practice because how we move changes how we think and feel. Our minds and bodies are connected! Even when we're practicing being quiet and still the way we choose to hold our bodies affects our prayer or meditation. Some people like to get really comfortable when they meditate; others choose an uncomfortable pose on purpose to help them focus. Breath prayers use movements of the body to guide what the mind is doing.

And then there are prayers that are all about moving your whole body! If you went to Kids Church at Reservoir in preschool or kindergarten you may have had a chance to pray The Breastplate of Saint Patrick, which is a prayer with hand motions. Those motions help me remember the words, but they're more than that: moving my body along with the words makes them feel more whole and fully expressed as I pray them. It's just like how one of my favorite ways to move my body is dancing to joyful music. When I listen to music I enjoy it, but when I move with it I feel like I really get to become part of it.

On Easter, Pastor Steve led us through a whole-body spiritual exercise that took some elements from yoga, a set of spiritual practices that originated in ancient India. He explained that he's not a yoga teacher and doesn't have an Indian background, but he's still able to gratefully take advantage of the centuries of experience in mind-body connection and connection with God that yoga practice involves. I want to invite you to try the same exercise. If you can, safely, stand up and let your body bend down: touch your knees, or your feet, or the floor, and stay like that for a breath. Then slowly straighten up, from the bottom of your back up to your neck and finally your head, then lift your arms and bring your hands together above your head. Take another breath, then open your hands and hold your palms upward and say, "Jesus, I welcome your hope and new possibility." Do it a few times. How does that make you feel? How do the words feel different when you say them along with the motions?

And that's what I have for today! I hope you have a wonderful day of moving and connection with God.

*flip over for more!*

## Wondering Questions

I wonder how you like to move your body?

I wonder how you feel after you've been sitting still for a long time? How about after you've been working hard moving your body?

I wonder if you have a way of moving that helps you feel connected to God or to yourself?