

An Introduction to Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer was developed centuries ago to help us with the listening part of communication with God, otherwise known as prayer. It has been reintroduced to western society as a prayer form. It is not intended to replace other forms of prayer. It is intended to invite God to be active in our souls. The guidelines are meant to be simple. They are:

1. Find a quiet place to sit.
2. Choose a word that for you is a sign that you want God to be present and active within you. Think of it as your “invitation word.” Some possibilities include Jesus, Lord, Father, Spirit, Cross, Resurrection, Love, Master, etc.
3. Sit comfortably and repeat your invitation word peacefully and gently. Let your mind and soul settle into a listening silence.
4. If you become aware of wandering or distracting thoughts during your prayer time, gently go back to your invitation word.
5. Conclude your prayer time with a few moments of silence. Alternatively, you may end by slowly reciting the Our Father, the Hail Mary, or the Glory Be.

Most writers recommend practicing Centering Prayer for two twenty minute periods a day, once early in the day and again around the evening meal time, to gain the maximum benefit. Even shorter times and once a day can be beneficial.

If Centering Prayer is to be done in a group, the leader might say or lead a prayer to the Holy Spirit asking for his help during the prayer time. If it is not distracting to the participants, gentle, flowing background music might be played during the prayer time. The leader would initiate the recitation of the prayer chosen to conclude the session.