



TOWARD A TRUER SELF

centering prayer - a way of wordless prayer

grounding again and again in God's presence & love

- find a comfortable place; maybe enjoy a psalm or similar reading to ready your heart
- set a timer for 5 or 10 minutes (increase to 20 minutes as able)
- place yourself in a position of relaxed attention
- gently speak a prayer word you've chosen that signifies your intention to be fully with God and yourself see below
- offer a posture of "yes" to God's presence abiding in and with you (1 Cor 6:19)
release a need to feel God; just lovingly be with God and yourself
- keep things light, loose, have no expectations or demands - just remain
- when finished be grateful for the time however it went! Release it, return tomorrow

wandering thoughts

- when the mind wanders, just gently return to your intention to be with God
If your mind wanders 1,000 times that's 1,000 opportunities to return to Jesus!
- don't fight thoughts or try to have no thoughts
 - don't hassle yourself about wandering thoughts, expect them; when you become aware of them, simply return to your intention to attend God
 - let thoughts gently pass through your mind while attentiveness anchors your heart
- When attention drifts, gently speak a word that signifies your intention to be with God
examples: "yes," "be," "God," "Jesus" - or any word that renews your intention to attend God

A helpful picture: Thomas Keating, an early formulator of *Centering Prayer*, often used the following example regarding wandering thoughts: Imagine yourself sitting alongside a stream, noticing boats of various shapes and sizes float past. These boats represent the countless thoughts and images always active in our minds that distract us from our intention to sit fully present to God and ourselves. Keating's suggestion? Let the boats float by. Don't jump aboard to try to steer them. That is, don't oppose or resist stray thoughts and feelings. This just gives them more power to distract. Let them float downstream while we, with relaxed attention, just return again and again to God's presence and love.