

Contemplative Prayer



*How gently and lovingly you wake in my Heart,
where in secret you dwell alone,
and in your sweet breathing filled with good and glory,
how tenderly you swell with Love.”
~ St. John of the Cross*

Contemplative Prayer . . . a transition of focus is being made so that we can become more in tune with our Lord's Loving Presence within our Heart. From this depth of relationship, we are able to "be still and know" ... hear his Word, engage in prayerful conversation with Him and receive wise directions and choices for our daily life situations ... but most importantly we are able to merge with his Living Presence in the stillness of our Heart.

Contents

A Contemplative Prayer Sample	4
Take Off Your Shoes	6
Standing On Tip Toe	10
Search Me, O God, and Know My Name	16
Abide In Me	20
Contemplative Petitions	24
Enlivened by Living Waters	27
The Quiet Place	31
Awaiting the Birth	35

[Written and compiled by Elizabeth Young for her church community's "Cove Group." The fall of 2018 up to Christmas.]

A Contemplative Prayer Sample

In this Contemplative or Reflective prayer, we are making a transition of focus so that we can become more in tune with our Lord's Loving Presence within our Heart. From this depth of relationship, we are able to hear his Word, engage in prayerful conversation with Him and receive His direction. But, most importantly, we are merging into the Stillness of His Living Presence within our Heart.

Now to begin ...

Assume a comfortable position in your chair and, if you wish, close your eyes.

Begin my asking Holy Spirit to guide your prayer and to fill you with God's Grace.

Let's begin by watching our breath. Breathing in, two, three.
Breathing out two, three four five.

Breathing in "Jesus my Lord, my God" ... breathing out any tensions or stress.

Breathing in "The Lord is my Shepherd" ... breathing out two, three, four. five.

Use what ever a special word or phrase that suits you.

Breathing in two three ... breathing out two three four five

If you become distracted, return to concentrating on your breathing ... letting the distractions go by ... so that you can turn your heart back to God. Be gentle with yourself.

(Stay with this for about 5 minutes and then ...)

Rest in the Stillness and Silence for a few minutes. If you get distracted gently bring your attention back to your breath.

If you want to talk with Jesus ...

Imagine a setting that is comfortable to you ... in a garden or by the sea ... a favorite place for you ... now see Jesus sitting there waiting for you. Sit with Him or walk with Him ... you can talk with Jesus ... listen to him speak to you ... talk about something that has happened to you recently ... or about a forthcoming event in your life ...
or simply sit with him in the Silence and Stillness feeling his Presence embracing you inside and out ...

Silence for a few minutes

Now, you are ready for any reading of the Gospel or whatever life has for you today feeling his Blessed Presence within you each step of the way.

End now with a gratitude prayer as you move forward into your day.

Note: A guided meditation: “*Contemplative Prayer*” by Elizabeth:
<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/contemplativeprayer>>

Session One

Take Off Your Shoes

When I was a child wading in the brook I understood totally the needlessness of shoes. Shoes in a brook are only for the overcautious, for those who would not dare to risk a stubbed toe. But there is no way to go through life without stubbed toes. At least, there is no beautiful way — no holy way.

There will come a time in your life when the only sacred thing left to do is to take off your shoes.

Take off your shoes to celebrate:

- the holy ground of your life
- the rushing waters of a brook
- the good earth or,
- God speaking to you from a burning bush.

There are things in your life that prevent you from experiencing the season of Wonder. Getting rid of these things can be like a call to take off your shoes.

The meditations in this section ask you to:

- take off your shoes
- investigate burning bushes
- give up false gods
- peel off layers of ego
- take down walls of separation
- strip away the unnecessary
- wait with patience
- say good-bye so the Spirit can come
- remove all obstacles to wonder
- walk barefoot in creek beds delighted and unafraid.

If you should ever hear God speaking to you from a burning bush, and it happens more often than most of us realize, *take off your shoes* for the ground on which you stand is holy.

(Reading taken from “Seasons of Your Heart” by Macrina Wiederkehr)

The Birth of a Prophet

Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, priest of Midian. He led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of Yahweh appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing but it was not being burnt up. “I must go and look at this strange sight,” Moses said, “and see why the bush is not burned.” Now Yahweh saw him go forward to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. “Moses, Moses!” He said. “Here I am,” he answered. “Come no nearer,” He said. “Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.”

(Exodus 3:1-5, JB)

Only when Moses gave his attention to this fiery sign did God speak to him out of those flames.

{Pause for us to contemplate and respond to these questions:}

- What does this say about the burning bushes of our own lives?
- What are the signs that, perhaps, we must turn aside to see if we are to hear God’s voice today?
- And the shoes? They too have a message.

We struggle so to be holy. We yearn for the divine. Yet, how often we are standing on holy ground and need only take off our shoes to strip away whatever prevents us from experiencing the holy. I believe that God speaks to us in the burning bushes of today, and the message is still one of a holy ground that we miss because of unnecessary shoes.

{Sharing}

So remember, if God every speaks to you out of the flames *take off your shoes* and allow the prophet within you to be born.

{Come into contemplative prayer to contemplate this:}

The Moses in my heart trembles
not quite willing
to accept the prophet hidden in my being
wondering how much it will cost
to allow that prophet to emerge.

O child of unnecessary shoes
cast them off
and stand in readiness
on this holy ground.
For the Egypt in people's lives
demands that you see the burning bushes
all around you
afame
burning wildly
calling you
away from the comfort
of well-protected feet.

The ground you stand on is holy.
Take off your shoes!
Awaken your sleeping prophet
Believe in your Moses
and go ...

Prayer for Taking Off Your Shoes

Creator of fire and water,
Your burning bush has turned
 into a bubbling brook
And I have taken off my shoes
 having heard you call my name.

You do not speak in fire only, Lord.
In water you have sung your songs
And you are singing still.
Today you chant a memory-song
 to my grown-up Heart.

You are washing my anxiety away
You are reminding me of days of old
 when I had time to play.
I stand barefoot upon the stones
 the rushing water,
 lapping at my heels.

The sharp stones pierce my grown-up soles
My tough child-feet have worn away
 as I grew up, forgetting to play.

Creator of the rocks and streams,
I'm growing up once more
I'm taking off my shoes
 and remembering to adore.

My feet are getting tough again
My Heart is getting young.

{Pause in Silence to contemplate and reflect}

Note: A guided meditation: "*Contemplative Prayer*" by Elizabeth:
<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/contemplativeprayer>>

Session Two: Standing on Tip Toe

Standing on tiptoe is not a children's game of balance. Rather, it is the beautiful prayer of balancing God's promises with my joyful expectation. It is the Season of Hope! I am God's Story of Hope.

The Christian Heart has a built-in urgency to expect good things. And why not? We have been promised to much:

- eternal life
- a dwelling place in the heavens
- living water
- answered prayers
- healing and forgiveness
- resurrection
- freedom that comes from knowing the truth
- sacramental life for our journey homeward
- the Spirit
- a new heart.

It is no wonder, then, that in spite of all the brokenness of our lives, we are still standing on tiptoe waiting for the glorious freedom promised us as children of God. This confident waiting is called hope, and our lives are empty without it. It is a small seed that grows wildly when it is nurtured. We cannot teach someone to hope. We give hope by living out of our own hope. We give hope by eagerly awaiting the blessings that have been promised us.

In the midst of all these premisses you are encouraged and challenged to keep standing on tiptoe. Your joyful expectation might be just the healing ointment needed to minister to someone's tired hope.

(Reading taken from "Seasons of Your Heart" by Macrina Wiederkehr)

{Contemplative/Reflective Prayer in preparation for scripture reading}

Hoping in Darkness

It appears to me that whatever we suffer now will show up only dimly when compared to the wonders God has in store for us. It is as though all creation is standing on tiptoe longing to see an unforgettable vision, the children of God being born into wholeness.

Although creation is unfinished, still in the process of being born, it carries within a secret hope. And the hope is this: A day will come when we will be rescued from the pain of our limitation and incompleteness and be given our share in a freedom that can only belong to the children of God.

At the present moment all creation is struggling as though in the pangs of childbirth. And that struggling creation includes even those of us who have had a taste of the Spirit. We peer into the future with our limited vision, unable to see all that we are destined to be, yet believing because of a hope we carry so deep within.

[Romans 8:18-25 a paraphrase]

Romans 8:18-25 gives us the beautiful vision of creation straining forward, on tiptoe, eagerly waiting for deliverance, for birth, longing to be caught up in God's plan for its wholeness.

(The following from "Seasons of Your Heart" by Macrina Wiederkehr) Holding this passage up against my own life, I am deeply touched at how personal it has become for me. My own birth into this world began with a proclamation of death. I was proclaimed dead...set aside as *not living*. The nurse, I am told, took me, worked with me, believed in the spark of life in me. She convinced me I could breathe.

Meditating on this story, I am filled with a mixture of anger, tenderness, gratitude, and hope. How easy it would be to throw someone away right in the middle of their birth. I speak not only of that first birth, but of the many ways we are born each day.

Our vision is limited. We need so desperately to learn how to hope more completely in all those little bits of life scattered through our days. We need to be so very careful lest we throw someone away because of our lack of hope in their potential, their possibility to be. We need to believe in that mystery within, even when the mystery seems to pale and small we can hardly call it by its true name, *life*.

This reflection is meant to encourage you to hope. Hope much in the lives of those around you, so that it never need be said of you that someone died because you failed to believe in them.

There was a day in July
many mornings ago
(7:15am to be exact)
when my hope was so small
I didn't know I was alive.
The doctor placed me aside
and announced the sad news of my death
right in the middle of my birth.

But God was good
and gave someone enough hope
to believe in me.
She leaned forward,
believing in darkness
what some folks refused to believe
in the the Light.
She believed in me
and she held me as though
the stirring of the eternal
had just begun, as though the mystery within
was just being born.

And the joy of it is:
She was right!
Because of her hope in me
I live!

And ever since that day in July
the mystery within me has grown.
The eternal within keeps stirring anew
like a fountain of living water
like a spring that never runs dry.

Could it be true
that some folks die
because our hope is too small
to bring them forth?

It is good to remember:
We do not give birth to ourselves.
We give birth to others
by believing in that first, small spark of life
the spark we can barely see.

It is called hope
It is immensely helpful
at birth

Questions:

1. Who had hope in you — that saved you? {Sharing}
2. Who in your life do you need to give hope to? {Sharing}
3. What part of your life feels dead and hopeless and in need of love — someone to carry Hope with you? {Sharing}

A Prayer for after a Night of Discouragement

God of compassion
Restorer of the Dawn
We know of course
You and I
that morning will,
after this prolonged night,
return.
I've waited before
and never been disappointed
weary, but not disappointed.

Brand your hope
into the center of my Heart
just as you once carved me
on the palm of your hand, (Isiah 49:16)
so that if anyone should question me
about my hope in darkness
I'll be every ready to explain. (1 Peter 3:15)

“Suffering, pain, sorrow, humiliation, feelings of loneliness, are
nothing but a sign that you have come so close to Jesus that He can
kiss you.”

~ Mother Teresa, “The Blessings of Love”

Note: A guided meditation: “*Holy Spirit: Breath of Life*”
by Elizabeth:
<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/contemplativeprayer>>

{End with this positive Prayer of Hope}

A Prayer for Standing on Tiptoe

On tiptoe we stand, Lord Jesus
eagerly awaiting
your full revelation
always expecting you
to come some more.

Our hands and hearts
are open to your grace.
Our lives still waiting for the fullness of your presence
We are those who have been promised
a Kingdom, and we can never forget
We have a foot in both worlds
and so we stumble.

But still we stand
on tiptoe
Owning our kingdom-loving hearts
and our earth-eyes
We lean forward
and hope.

{Pause in Silence to contemplate and reflect}

{Invite any prayers for ourselves or for friends and loved ones}

Session: Three

Search Me, O God, and Know My Heart

{Opening with Contemplative Prayer}

Psalm 139

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written,
every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there
was none of them.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of
them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my
thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in
the way everlasting!

Daily Examen

A great way to pray is to look for God's presence in your life. More
than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled
mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The
Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day
in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us.

In the prayer of examen we identify two moments in the past day or
week. The first is our "desolation" the point at which we felt farthest
away from God or most alienated from our truest deepest Self. The
second moment is our "consolation" that moment when we felt closest
to God or most in sync with our truest deepest Self, which is the same.

One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of
the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the
feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation?
Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying
through these feelings?

Examen Exercise

First Step:

Reflective/Contemplative Prayer — being still and then review your day, asking yourself: “*When did I feel most alienated from my truest, deepest self or farthest away from God?*”
(*Silence and Stillness* to receive your “desolation”)

{Sharing together what has come up — with no comments about what others share. This provides safety to share without fear of criticism or “fixing.”}

{Ask God for help/reconciliation with our desolations.}

Second Step:

Reflective/Contemplative Prayer — being still and then review your day, asking yourself: “*What is the moment that I felt closest to God and most in sync with my truest deepest Self?*”
(*Silence and Stillness* to receive your “consolation”)

{Sharing with together what has come up — with no comments about what others share. This provides safety to share without fear of criticism or “fixing.”}

{Lift up our consolations for thanksgiving.}

Note: A guided meditation: “*Examen Prayer*” by Elizabeth:
<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/contemplativeprayer>>

Thanks Be To You

That You formed my body in the darkness of the womb
and fashioned every creature from the soil of the earth
thanks be to You, O God.

That You knitted into my senses
a thirst for water and a hunger for food
and wove into every living being
desires for life
and pleasure in their satisfaction
thanks be to You

Let me be alert
to the yearnings that you have placed within me
and let me know what will truly satisfy the desires of my Heart.
Let me be attentive
to the yearnings that you have planted in every human being
and let me be sure of what will fulfill them.
Let me be guided by your wisdom, O Christ,
let me be guided by your Wisdom.

The vitality of God be mine this day
the vitality of the God of life.

The passion of Christ be mine this day
the passion of the Christ of Love.

The wakefulness of the Spirit be mine this day
the wakefulness of the Spirit of justice.

The vitality and passion and wakefulness of God be mine
that I may be fully alive this day
the vitality and passion and wakefulness of God
that I may be fully alive.

(By J. Phillip Newell)

Session Four

“Abide in Me”

(Open with Contemplative Prayer)

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

~ John 15:1-8 (NASB)

As I was being with these words, in a contemplative way, the true meaning began resonating within me deeply and it came up to share what emerged with you.

Words are a *capsule of experience*. Have you ever read the dictionary to discover the Latin root of each word and then find the synonyms of the words to find this *capsule of experience*? Viewing words from this perspective, they just come alive with meaning. They resonate with experience. As I read the bible, I find myself only wanting to read the words of Jesus to resonate in this *capsule of experience* with Him.

Jesus says, “Abide in Me, and I in you ...”

“Abide” is a word that has several meanings, but the one that stood out for me was “dwell.” And, when I looked up “dwell” the synonyms were: “*reside, stay, have your home, inhabit, settle.*” Now, “abide” begins to come alive.

*“Abide, dwell, reside, stay, have your home, settle ... where?
in Me ... and I in you.”*

How does one fully experience “*Abide in Me and I in you*” directly, in our own Heart?

Have you ever fallen in Love? I mean really opened your Heart to someone and felt a warmth fill your chest ... a warm glow that fills you up entirely if you really open up to it and fully let go into it?

{Close your eyes and move into a contemplative/reflective prayer}

Feel this warmth of Love in your chest. And, as we give over to this warmth ... this glow ... doesn’t this warm glow begin to fill you up right now?

It’s Love, my friends, Pure Love ... radiating and embracing us here and now. And, as we continue to give over to this warmth, doesn’t it glow brighter through the body ... and even begin to fill the space around us and everyone in this room?

Luxuriate in this Radiance of Love that is filling us up, from the inside out, and fully encompassing us, now. Receive fully ... abide in this Radiance ... soak in this warmth of Love ... it is in us, at the very Heart of us ... our true support ... nourishing our very Soul.

This is true *abiding*, dear One. It is true meditation ... it is true contemplative prayer ... not just thinking about the words being shared by Jesus, but directly resonating and luxuriating in the experience of His living Presence. It’s tapping into the pulse of the Living Truth and fully abiding in it experientially ... directly ... here and now.

{Silence while abiding in His Loving Presence}

Questions:

1. What is your experience of “abiding.” {Sharing}
2. What is a practical application of this in our daily lives? {Sharing}

A practical application:

As we are about our daily lives, we simply check-in to see where we are by asking ourselves one simple question, “*Abiding?*” Try it yourself and you might be pleasantly surprised as to how quickly Jesus’ Radiance of Love will respond. Then, just simply luxuriate in His Presence as a warmth of Love while walking, talking, eating, etc.

Thank you, Lord, for your Loving Presence in my life now and forever.

Questions:

1. Are there any questions or sharing?

Note: A guided meditation: “*Abiding in Christ’s Presence*” by Elizabeth:

<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/contemplativeprayer>>

Blessed Are You ...

Blessed are You, O Christ

Blessed are You, O Child of the Dawn,
for your Light that dapples through creations
on leaves that shimmer in the morning sun
and in showers of rain that wash the earth.

Blessed are You
for the human spirit dappled with Eternal Light
in its longings for love and birth
and its pain-filled passions and tears.

Blessed are you, O Christ,
for you awaken in me to life.

Blessed are you
for you stir me to true desire.

May the Light of God

May the Light of God
illumine the Heart of my soul.

May the flame of Christ
kindle me to Love,

May the fire of the Spirit
free me to live
this day, tonight and for ever.

(By J. Phillip Newell)

Session Five

Contemplative Petitions

(Open with Contemplative Prayer)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

~ Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV)

“Contemplative Petitions” is a way to link contemplative prayer, and being in union with God, with our cares and concerns for the world. Joining the inward with the outward.

We will be reviewing this in three “movements.”

First Movement:

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything ...”

[Guided contemplative prayer: “Rejoice and be Grateful”

The command: Do not be anxious about anything. Let your thoughts and worries drift away. The Lord is near. He is nearer than breathing ... closer than hands and feet.]

[Remain in Stillness and Silence moving into the second movement]

Second Movement:

... “but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

So, out of this place of peace, see what arises from your Heart. What are the needs that God is placing on your Heart ... not the lists of what *I should pray for* ... but what arises naturally from your Heart.

[Petitions]

Third Movement:

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Now, from this place of peace ... let it be ... place all concerns and burdens for others or ourselves ... into the capable hands of God. The promise is that God's Peace ... that is beyond understanding ... will take care of it all. So, returning to the Stillness and Peace, put all of your prayers into God's Hands ... they don't belong to you anymore.

[Complete the Contemplative Prayer abiding in God's Peace and Stillness filled with Joy and Gratitude]

Note: A guided meditation: “*Contemplative Petitions*” by Elizabeth:
<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/contemplativeprayer>>

Awaken Us

You are our strength and salvations, O God.
You are our hope and deliverer.
In the midst of fear and uncertainty in our lives
and when the powerless of the world
are overwhelmed by might forces,
recall us to our True source of help.
Awaken us again to your strong Presence within us.
Awaken us again into Hope.

Blessings

The blessings of heaven,
the blessings of earth,
the blessings of sea and of sky.
On those we love this day
and on every human family
the gifts of heaven,
the gifts of earth,
the gifts of sea and of sky.

(By J. Phillip Newell)

Session Six

Enlivened by Living Waters

Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, *"Will you give me a drink?"* (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."* "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered, *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." ~ John 4: 1-15



A guided contemplative prayer:

- Put yourself in the place of “the woman at the well” — How does it feel to be rejected from your people due to misfortunes of her life? — You had to go to the well to get your water when no one was there — where Jews and Samaritans don’t mix.
- Be in this woman’s shoes — how does it feel?
- Now, realize the acceptance of Jesus toward you — he is asking you for water — you are feeling unworthy — a Jew asking a Samaritan for water, what is this?
- Then, he says to you, *“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”*
- You don’t understand and ask him, *“Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”*
- Jesus answered, *“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*
- Experience this “spring of living water” welling up within you now — the Spirit of the Living God bubbling up from within you — receive now the refreshing living water — it is deeply satisfying — filling you up with vitality and aliveness — there is deep joy and satisfaction and contentment from connecting with His Loving Presence within the depths of your Heart — it is real — it is the Truth that passes all understanding — and it sets you free.
- Abide in this Heart-felt Truth — this Living Water — His Holy Presence as Love — His promise is coming alive within us now
- Rest in His ever abiding Love and Grace [Silence]

Note: A guided meditation: “*Enlivened by Living Waters*” by Elizabeth:
<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/contemplativeprayer>>

Questions & Sharing:

- What is your experience of getting into the woman’s shoes of being so lost and then and being so completely “seen” by Jesus?
- Did you feel you received His gift of Living Water?
- How was this experience felt in you? (Play “Make Me A River”)

Read ~ John 4:19-30

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” “Woman,” Jesus replied, *“believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”* The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, *“I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”*

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Question:

What were the results for the woman after being in Jesus’ Loving Presence and experiencing His Living Water?

Note:

When the woman got in touch with her essence through the insight Jesus imparted to her, she realized she had within her [in her relationship with God the Father] all the resources she needed for a truly fulfilling life. As a result, her relationships with everybody changed. This enabled her to love people unconditionally, which so amazed the people of her village that they too came to meet Jesus. Because of the woman’s experience, the whole village connected with each other at a new level.

Drawing from the Inner Well

O Christ, in whom the fullness of God dwells,
you are deep within our lives and all life,
you are deep within this place and every place.
In this place and this time and in the depths of our own soul
we draw from the inner well of your Love
that we too might be filled with the fullness of God
and that you might do within us and in our world
far more than we could every ask or imagine.

Being Fully Alive

The vitality of God be mine this day
the vitality of the God of life.
The passion of Christ be mine this day
the passion of the Christ of Love.
The wakefulness of the Spirit be mine this day
the wakefulness of the Spirit of [True] Self.
The vitality of passion and wakefulness of God be mine
that I may be fully alive this day
the vitality and passion and wakefulness of God
that I may be fully alive.

(By J. Phillip Newell)

“In contrast to virtually the whole salmon-swimming-upstream orientation of the perennial wisdom—that the way to God is ‘up,’ moving from lower to higher—Jesus here places his entire bet on the process of inter-abiding: I in you, you in me, all in God, God in all. It is not a ladder but a circle that brings us to God: the continuously renewed giving and receiving which in its totality is where God dwells.”

~Cynthia Bourgeault, The Wisdom Jesus

Session Seven

The Quiet Place

“Then because so many people were coming and going and they had not even had a chance to eat, He said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” Mark 6:31

Taking the time now, in this meditation, to come with Jesus and rest in His Holy Presence.

Let us prepare the way for this experience through this prayer from Jude Hannaman:

*“Lord Jesus,
You call to us in the constant
coming and going of people in our lives.
Appointments; phone calls; meeting; demands; questions; TV
urgencies; overhead airplanes; auto entry beeps; snow plows; lawn
mowers; ambulance sirens; honking cars; cell phone chatter;
50 MPH.*

*You know we have not even had a chance to eat of You,
the Bread come down from Heaven,
the food which alone gives nourishment.*

*Through the most generous guidance of Your Holy Spirit,
help us come away by ourselves
to a quiet place with You.*

*Help us hear Your calling us to rest in You,
to discover within ourselves
the inner Heart of quiet listening to You.*

*Feed us with Your Presence, O Lord.
Amen.”*

Now we are open and ready to receive His Holy Presence
in the Quiet Place within us.

[Close your eyes and open to His Holy Presence in this Quiet Place
within us.]

Have you noticed a warm, loving glow present
when you contemplate the words of Jesus,
and call upon Him to come near?

Call upon Him now,
“Draw me close to you, Lord”

[Pause to receive Him into our Heart]

Don't you feel safe and held closely in His Holy Presence?
Notice this now.

Bring your attention to the loving glow of His Holy Presence
allow His Love to overcome you.

Jesus is here, now, in this inner Heart of quiet
within you.

Just by your acknowledging and honoring His Holy Presence,
here and now, in this moment, your Heart is illuminated and
filled with His Love.

“Feed us with Your Presence, dear Lord.”

[Pause here to be filled with His Presence of Love]

If thoughts come up to distract you, simply shift your attention to this
radiant Love within you.

Be faithful to what is here and now, within you.

Rest here ... Feel His embrace wrapping around you
releasing your cares and burdens.

[Pause here choosing a few situations to release these cares and
burdens into his loving hands]

Feast on this Bread of Heaven,
the food which alone gives nourishment.

You have located the Quiet Place, within you,
where this Holy Presence dwells.
Rest here, dear one, be refreshed and renewed.

All is welcomed here.

Thank you, Jesus
Thank you.
Amen

[Share your experiences being with the Lord in prayer and meditation.
Ending with the following prayers from J. Phillip Newell.]

Your Living Presence Within Us

You, O Christ, are within us and among us,
as the one who is alive for ever.
In the sorrows and sufferings of our lives you are with us
as the one who holds the keys of new beginnings.
There is no ending in the world,
there is no fear in our lives,
there is no despair in our hearts,
that your living Presence cannot unlock.
You are winning us and among us, O Christ,
as the one who is alive for ever.

Show us the Way, the Truth, and the Life

O Christ, who is the leader of our faith,
show us the Way.

O Christ, who suffered for the sake of Love,
show us the Truth.

O Christ, who has gone ahead of us into the Heart of God,
show us the Life,
the Life that creates life,
the Life that saves life,
the Life that loves life.

The blessings of heaven,
the blessings of earth,
the blessings of sea and of sky,
On those we love this day
and on every human family
the gifts of heaven,
the gifts of earth,
the gifts of sea and of sky.

Amen.

Note:

This guided meditation “The Quiet Place” by Elizabeth is located here:
<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/contemplativeprayer>>

Session Eight

Awaiting the Birth

I invite you to experience the true “reason for the season” ...
connecting with Christ’s Presence within us all and experiencing what
happened 2000 years ago ... here and now ...

<<http://www.meditations-for-everyone.info/christmas-meditations>>



Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)

I have traveled many moonless nights
Cold and weary, with a babe inside
And I wonder what I've done
Holy Father you have come
And chosen me now, to carry your son

I am waiting in a silent prayer
I am frightened by the load I bear
In a world as cold as stone
Must I walk this path alone?
Be with me now
Be with me now

(Chorus)
Breath of heaven
Hold me together
Be forever near me
Breath of heaven
Breath of heaven
Lighten my darkness
Pour over me your holiness
For you are holy
Breath of heaven

Do you wonder as you watch my face
If a wiser one should have had my place
But I offer all I am
For the mercy of your plan
Help me be strong
Help me be
Help me

(Chorus)

Youtube for "Breath of Heaven" Song by Amy Grant:
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyNZVMxd2nM>>

Let us pray ...

Lord, may I always remain aware of your Radiant Christ Presence within me,

Jesus, may I always know my breath is always one with your breath ... as the breath of Heaven.

Lord Jesus, continue to lighten my darkness and fill me with inspiration and hope.

Lord Jesus, I will remain faithful to your Loving Presence within me ... always and forever more.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you. Amen



Click here for an article to prepare a welcoming place for the birthing of love in the silence:
<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/28005/before-incarnation-comes-the-silence>

[All together] (Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen)
Sing it over! (Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen)

See the little baby, (Amen)
 wrapped in a manger (Amen)
On Christmas morning! (Amen, Amen, Amen)

Singing in the temple, (Amen)
 talking with the elders (Amen)
Who marveled at His wisdom. (Amen, Amen, Amen)

Down at the Jordan, (Amen)
 John was baptizing (Amen)
And savin' all sinners. (Amen, Amen, Amen)

See Him at the seaside, (Amen)
 talking with the fishermen (Amen)
And made them disciples. (Amen, Amen, Amen)

Marching in Jerusalem! (Amen)
 Over palm branches (Amen)
In pomp and splendor! (Amen, Amen, Amen)

See Him in the garden, (Amen)
 praying to His Father. (Amen)
In deepest sorrow. (Amen, Amen, Amen)

Led by Pilate, (Amen)
 then they crucified Him (Amen)
But He rose on Easter! (Amen, Amen, Amen)

Hallelujah! (Amen)
He died to save us. (Amen)
And He lives forever! (Amen, Amen, Amen)

Hallelujah! [All] (Amen, Amen, Amen)