

Learning to be Still



Gazing on God

St Teresa of Avila used to say that when praying the important thing is not to think much but to love much. This exercise is one which she recommended to everybody. It is very simple!

Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor and your back supported by the chair. Close your eyes.... Take a few moments to become still, breathing gently.... Be aware of each breath... now imagine that you see Jesus standing in front of you... he is gazing at you... notice him looking at you.... Notice that he is gazing at you lovingly... and humbly.... Jesus who washes his friends' feet... who died on a cross because he loves you...

Another suggestion for prayer without words

This uses a short word or phrase to help people refocus when they become distracted, otherwise the prayer is wordless. It should be the same one throughout the exercise. Focusing on a candle through half-open eyes can also help counteract any distractions.

Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor and your back supported by the chair. Close your eyes.... choose a word or short phrase which you can use whenever you become distracted .. such as God.. Jesus.. love.. Lord... Lord, have mercy... whatever you choose stay with this word ... use it to recall your attention when you become distracted, when thoughts crowd in. Take a few moments to become still again, breathing gently.... Be aware of each breath... gaze on God... without words... be attentive... when distractions come, return to your chosen word for as long as necessary, then let it go again.

Readings and Prayers

As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,
so is my beloved among young men.
With great delight I sat in his shadow,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his intention toward me was love.
Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples;
for I am faint with love.

Song of Solomon 2:3-5

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Love Silence:

It brings us near the fruit
which the tongue
is too weak to interpret.

From Silence:

something is born
which draws us
towards deeper silence.

May God grant us to perceive
that which is born
from Silence.

Isaac of Ninevah

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I desire to be all silence,
all adoration,
to penetrate ever deeper and deeper into God,
and to be so filled with God
that I may by my prayer
give him to those who do not know him.

Elizabeth of the Trinity