

**PRAYER and DISCERNMENT
at
LEASIDE UNITED CHURCH**

Winter Project 2010



WEEK ONE: January 17

Learning to be present in prayer.

In my personal experience, I would describe "prayer" with the following words: (circle as many as apply)

Effective	Restful	Delightful
Confusing	Not sure if works	Difficult
Warm	Connecting	Beautiful
Serene	I don't have time	I don't know how
Too wordy	Not connected	Ineffective
Loving	Act of self-worth	A gift I give
Heartfelt	A choice I make	Alignment
Calm	Powerful	Invisible power
Helps me grow	Creative	Opens possibility
Opens my heart	Opens my eyes	I can't pray
Presence	Spiritual	Raise consciousness
Opening	A virtue	Healing
Takes courage	Gives me courage	Makes me strong
Helps me focus	Like a shield	Safety
Grace	Gives direction	Breathing
Does nothing at all	Hurts	Is disconnected
Blesses me	Blesses others	Is distracting
Makes me grateful	Makes me happy	Is emotional
Close to God	Helps me listen	I fall asleep
Hard to maintain	Sense of peace	Want to DO

Now list here the 5 most positive attributes (from above), or add your own:

EXERCISE: THE "HERE I AM" PRAYER

(Adapted from 50 Ways to Pray, Teresa Blythe)

The goal: to learn to be present in prayer

The practice: every day for 5 minutes

Set-up: turn off cell phone, TV, computer, shut door to room.
Sit comfortably in a chair, even your work chair .

The Prayer: Say to yourself, as many times as you need, and breathe deeply in between each point:

- "I am here, doing nothing at all right now."
- Feel your body in the chair, your feet on the floor. Feel your breath, your mind moving, your temperature. Say: "I am here, just being myself."
- Ease into the following: "I am here in the presence of God." Say this to yourself as many times as you need. (Substitute "Love" for God if that works better for you)
- Remembering those 5 things you named on the previous page, simply say them to yourself. "Today, may I be....."

When you get really good at this, you can add step 2:

At the end of the prayer, bring to your mind someone for whom you are concerned, or a situation (personal, work, even world situation) that you are dealing with. Using the same 5 words from the previous point, say,

"Today may ___(name)_____ be filled with"

The Serenity Prayer:

Many people are familiar with the Serenity prayer, memorized everywhere by Alcoholics Anonymous.

But did you know there is more to it?

The original prayer was written by one of the 20th century's big names in theology: Reinhold Niebuhr.

The prayer connects us to a deeper current and meaning of life. It brings our attention to the connections we have with all others, despite all that may occur in our lives. It puts us in a place of balance, where we can let things be, and allow the gifts of healing and courage to flow up from their natural source, our inner heart.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.
Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him.
Forever in the next.
Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

Fred Beuchner:

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."