

Adoration

# Prayer Tool: How to Practise Christian Meditation

## What?

Christian meditation is a simple way to stop, pause, and enjoy God's presence. This prayer tool will help you begin to integrate Christian meditation into your daily life.

## Why?

"Prayer is the interactive relationship we have with God about what we and God are working on together. Christian meditation is the listening side of this interactive relationship" Richard J Foster

## Bible reference:

"Blessed is the one who... meditates on your law day and night." Psalm 1:1-2

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## A quick introduction to Christian Meditation

Meditation is an ancient spiritual practice that helps many Christians grow in their ongoing friendship with Jesus.

The purpose of Christian meditation is to allow a space for our souls to gaze upon God. This will result in a shift for us, as Richard Foster puts it, from, "theological dogma to a radiant reality."

The result can be a deepening of our intimacy with God and a growth in reverent awe. The words of the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth encourage us towards such a practice of adoring prayer:

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3: 18

Paul's encouragement to the church in Corinth explicitly implies that such meditation on the beauty of Jesus will lead to transformation into His very image. The Biblical authors, from both the Old and New Testaments, were in no doubt - we cannot become what we cannot see.

Our highest priority is worship. Only in seeing Jesus will we fulfil the high calling of humanity: to outshine the stars with His glory. Adoring prayer in the form of an intimate meditation causes such a long, loving look to take place. Then, when we see Him, we will never be the same again.

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## **Do it: How to practise Christian Meditation**

### **The use of the imagination**

The accumulated wisdom of many saints through the centuries provides us with a number of ways we can engage our imaginations to help our meditative practice. We can learn to meditate on God's creation, beautiful art and even the events of our time for example, but Christian meditation should always start with meditation on scripture.

"I meditate on your precepts... open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." Psalm 119: 15, 18

This is a form of reading the Bible that focuses not so much on 'Bible study' as we commonly understand that word, but rather how we internalise the words in loving union with God.

There is a form of meditative prayer called "compose the place", promoted by Ignatius of Loyola in his famous Spiritual Exercises. It encourages readers to imagine themselves in a scene from the Bible, taking part in it, engaging all their senses and becoming aware of what they notice.

Listen. Touch. Taste. Look. Smell. Notice what you notice.

### **Using 'Compose the Place' meditative prayer**

You might like to use the transfiguration of Jesus, Matthew 17:1-8, as an example passage:

1. Begin by **inviting the presence of God** and ask the Holy Spirit to sanctify your mind anew.
2. **Imagine yourself in the scene** and engage all your senses. For example,

you may want to imagine yourself, like Peter, James or John, walking up the mountain with Jesus. Why have you been chosen? What are you feeling in your heart as you walk up? You watch Jesus transfigured – His face ‘shining like the sun’ and His clothes ‘dazzling white’, what do you see? In what ways are you overcome? You hear the voice of the Father speaking, ‘This is my son, whom I love; with him I am pleased. Listen to Him.’ How do you respond? As you walk back down the mountain with Jesus how have you been changed?

3. **Respond by praying out your love for God.** If you are comfortable, respond with your whole body – raise your hands in worship, sing a song of adoration, bow in holy reverence.
4. **Reflect on one particular area of God’s character** that He may be revealing and unveiling to you in these moments.
5. **Ponder how you are being changed** by this encounter with God’s presence.

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## **Books on Christian Meditation**

- Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation – Martin Laird
- Everything Belongs – Richard Rohr