

Breathing Prayer: From “How to Unhurry Workbook” – John Mark Comer

1. Put away your phone and any other distractions, settle into your time/place, and get comfortable. You may want to take a short walk first, or light a candle, or stretch, as a way of easing your soul into a new mode.

2. Watch your breathing.

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Sit in an upright, but relaxed position. Close your eyes.

Take slow, deep breaths. Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth. As you inhale, breathe all the way in until your stomach distends (this fills your brain with clean, clear oxygen).

As you exhale, shape your lips like you're breathing out through a straw, and push all the air out with your stomach muscles (getting all the carbon dioxide and toxins out of your system).

Feel the sensations in your body – stress, heartrate, tightness, calmness, pain, lightness, etc. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and it's a good gift. By becoming present in our body, we become present the moment, and eventually, in God himself.

Just “watch” your breath enter and exit your body. Pay attention to it and nothing else.

Your mind will seize this opportunity to run wild with thoughts, feelings, memories, to do's, and distractions. That's okay. It's used to constant chatter, not stillness. Don't judge yourself, feel like a failure, or

give up. Just let each thought go as quickly as it comes. When you notice your mind start to wander, just re-center with a quick prayer, like, “Father” or “Jesus” or “Peace” or the ancient, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner,” and come back to your breathing.

3. Pray.

Once you settle into a rhythm, begin to turn each breath into a prayer. One breath at a time, imagine yourself breathing out:

- Anger, Sadness, Anxiety, Despair, Fear, The Need To Control, Discontentment

And then imagine yourself breathing in its opposite:

- Love, Joy, Peace, Hope, Trust, Detachment, Contentment

4. Abide.

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Before you end this exercise, spend a little while just “abiding in the vine;” simply sit in loving attention on God. Watch God watching you in compassionate love. This is the core of all transformation into Christlikeness. Through resting under God's loving attention toward us by the Spirit, we are transformed.

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As St. John of the Cross once said, “What we need most in order to make progress is to be silent before this great God... for the language he best hears is silent love.”

Note: In the beginning, just 2-3 minutes of this is a win, and 10 minutes is a home run. Like many practices,

at first you may well feel awkward, or even anxious, but give it time. It will likely come to feel deeply enjoyable in time.

Lectio Divina/African Bible Study Method:

- Take one minute to be still.
- Pray for God's Spirit to speak to us and through us as we read His Word.
- Set up the text with any important context.

Round 1

- Prompt folks, "Listen for a word that sticks out."
 - Have passage read out loud.
 - Remember the word that stuck out.
- In groups, share what word stuck out and why.

Round 2

- Prompt folks, "Consider where this passage touches your life today."
 - Have passage read aloud again with different voice & different version.
- In groups, share where this passage touches your life today.

Round 3

- Prompt folks, "As a result of this scripture and discussion, what might the Lord be moving you to do or be?"
 - Read passage aloud in a third voice with a third version.
- In groups, share what the Lord might be moving you to do or be.
- Take another minute to be still and pray to close.