

Developing Your Own Prayer of the Heart

It is possible to discover your own prayer of the heart by using the following process based on the work of Episcopal author Ron DelBene.

1. **Relax.** Find a posture that allows you to be relaxed and alert. It helps to sit fairly straight. Close your eyes and breathe deeply several times. Consciously release any muscle tension you become aware of. Breathe in peace, breathe out tension.
2. **Relax your mind.** If particular thoughts keep returning, gather them up and give them to God to hold for you during this time. You can take them back later if you want.
3. **Visualize Jesus.** Imagine that Jesus is sitting next to you or standing in front of you. He looks into your eyes and calls you by name, asking you, "What do you want me to do for you?" Hear his question and let your response surface from deep within. If more than one thing comes to mind, identify the root desire beneath all the others, express it in a short phrase. Examples: Heal me. Give me strength. Grant me peace. Love me. Teach me your truth.
4. **Find your name for God.** How do you address God? What is your name for the Divine? Call to mind the name, title, or word you find most meaningful when you speak to God in prayer. Examples: Jesus, Holy One, Living Spirit, Eternal God, Teacher, Father, Mother, Lord, Holy Mystery.
5. **Bring together your name for God and your desire.** Combine the name you use to address God with the phrase that expresses what it is that you want Jesus to do for you. This should become a single short phrase that flows easily in your mind. Examples: Holy One, grant me peace. Jesus, heal me. Eternal God, give me strength. Holy Mystery, teach me your truth.
6. **Pray the phrase.** Sit quietly and repeat the phrase gently in your mind for the next few minutes.
7. **Rest into silence.** Let your phrase fade into silence. Rest in the silence, letting the Spirit guide you into the enfolding love of God.

For further reading:

DelBene, Ron. *The Breath of Life: A Simple Way to Pray*. Nashville: The Upper Room, 1992.

See also:

Prayer of the Heart: Jesus Prayer

Praying with Our Bodies: Walking Meditations

Prayer of the Heart: Breath Prayers