

Awareness - Stilling

The following awareness exercises can be used at the beginning of a prayer period to help you quieten down. Usually, it is good just to choose one way of stilling.

Posture for prayer is important. It is recommended that you use a position that is comfortable, but attentive - back straight, feet on the ground.



Awareness of Sounds

Listen to the sounds you can hear around you.

If you are indoors, allow yourself to notice sounds inside and outside the room.

Identify each sound as you are able.

Don't stay with any one sound.

Gently, slowly, without judging sounds as good or bad, focus your attention on each one then move on.

If a sudden sound or distraction occurs, acknowledge it and name it. Don't try to ignore it.

When ready, become aware of the sound of your own breathing.

Through the sounds, be attentive to the invitation of God, who dwells in creation...

Awareness of your body

Beginning at the top of your head and passing down through the body to the feet be attentive to each part of the body in turn.

Gently focus in turn on each part ... head ... face ... eyes ...neck ... shoulders etc.

For each part, allow a few moments to become aware of what is being felt, without making judgement upon it.

Feel temperature, clothing, moving air, tension, pain, tingling etc.

Move on in turn until you have given attention to your whole body.

Then consider your whole self ... you as a person made in God's likeness ... you in whom God chooses to dwell...

Walking

Walk slowly with awareness of whatever comes to you: the surroundings, thoughts, feelings, how your body is. It usually helps to walk more slowly than usual and to pay attention to what is around you.

Mantra

A mantra, a repeated short phrase, can help us to settle down.

Sometimes we think about the words, but mostly we let go of thinking and trust that simply saying the words is sufficient.

We can repeat the words in time with our walking or breathing or to the rhythm of music. There are many suitable phrases such as:

'Come Lord Jesus',

'The Lord is compassion and love' etc.

One of the most famous mantras is

'The Jesus Prayer': 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me, a sinner'.

Taken from ISC Glasgow Website.