



## *The Christian Connection*

**Clyde Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

206 S. Main Street, Clyde, Ohio 43410

Phone: 419-547-9628

Email: [clydechristianchurch@gmail.com](mailto:clydechristianchurch@gmail.com)

Web Page: [www.clydechristianchurch.org](http://www.clydechristianchurch.org)

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### **From the Pastor**

## **Centering Prayer**

Wow! It seems like just yesterday we were getting ready for Advent and Christmas. Then we flipped our calendars to 2024. All I know is when I look around, life is moving so fast. We all need time to slow down, let the distractions of our external world be quieted.

As Christians our external world is known as our active life. Another part of the Christian life is known as the contemplative life. Another way to identify this side of our lives is known as the quieter side of Christian spirituality. One spiritual exercise of quieting the outside is known as silent prayer or centering prayer. This form of prayer can be used in devotion time or when we just want to slow down for a few minutes. This type of prayer exercise has been a gracious gift for Christians to exercise for many centuries. Silent prayer or centering prayer comes to us from our monastic mothers and fathers of the faith.

Silent prayer, centering prayer or contemplative prayer describe the same form of prayer. We most often think of prayer as our thoughts and feelings expressed in words. Centering prayer is the opening of our minds, hearts and souls, our entire being – to God. It is praying in the presence of God beyond thoughts, words and emotions. We open our awareness to God whom we know by faith is within us, closer than the next breath we take. During this time of prayer we consent to God's presence and God's action within us. At other times our attention to God's presence moves outward when we discover God's presence everywhere. Centering prayer is not a relaxation exercise, it is not a technique, it is not a form of self-hypnosis and is not limited to the "felt" presence of God. Centering is, an exercise of faith, hope, and love. Centering prayer is a movement beyond conversation with God to communion with God.

Here are few guidelines to centering prayer.

1. Find a comfortable time in the day. Next, find a comfortable chair to sit in, then light a candle (which always symbolizes the light of Christ). Next give yourself a period of time, 5 minutes to 10 minutes to begin. I invite using a timer to indicate your prayer time. One that does not have an audible tick or loud sound when it goes off.

2. Once you are comfortable, begin deep breathing or diaphragm breathing. Take a few cleansing breaths and then begin the deep breathing. As you begin the deep breathing choose a sacred word, such as, Lord, Jesus, Peace, Love, Abba, Grace, Mercy or Hope. Allow the sacred word to express our intention to be in God's presence. The sacred word should be one that is comfortable to us. Sitting with eyes closed begin to introduce the sacred word as one's consent to God and God's presence.

3. With eyes still closed, allow God's moving within you. When one becomes aware of roaming thoughts, return ever so gently to the sacred word. Let the sacred word roll over the tongue, silently, until even the sacred word is silenced and let go of what is going on around us and within us. As scripture says, "be still and know that I am God."

4. At the end of the prayer time, 5,7,10 or even 15 minutes, when the timer ends remain in the silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes (2 or 3 minutes). Take a few more cleansing breaths, allowing your internal self time to readjust to the external senses which enables us to gently bring the atmosphere of silence into our daily life.

I share and invite you to use this prayer form. The only focus is opening ourselves to the presence of Christ in us and around us. It is another prayer type to have in our spiritual tool belt. May the Lord bless us in our experience in centering prayer.

Blessings for the Journey,  
Pastor Chuck

