

A great source on many topics related to our spiritual lives is the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) of the United Methodist Church. This week I begin a multi week series based on the article: "Re-energize Your Prayer Life" written by Joe Iovino and published Feb 20, 2015 at the GBOD website.

Disciple Life

The Wesleyan Way

Week # 26

"Lord, teach us to pray," the disciples request of Jesus (Luke 11:1 CEB). Many of us who lack confidence in our prayer lives ask the same of our pastors and others who seem to have a better handle on that spiritual discipline.

As United Methodists we know the value of [works of piety](#) like prayer. The third of [John Wesley's three rules for the Methodist Church](#) was to continue "attending upon all the ordinances of God." The list of examples he offered with this rule included "Family and private prayer."

Learning to pray is like learning to ride a bicycle. What we can learn from a book or class is not enough. Proficiency comes through practice.

Additionally, because prayer is a form of communication, there is no one-size-fits-all technique. Each of us needs to find our unique style.

Spending a day or season invigorating your prayer life is time well spent. Experiment with some new-to-you ways of praying. You might be surprised to find what works best for you.

Be still

You don't necessarily need words to pray. In Psalm 46 God tells his people who were busy trying to please him, "That's enough! Now know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:10 CEB). Sometimes we need to stop performing for God and simply "be still."

This can be hard at first because it is so unfamiliar. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes, or find some relaxing music or sound effects that will mark the time. Then be quiet and rest in the presence of God.



Start the Conversation:
Provoke One Another in Love

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

When was the last time you tried praying in a different way? How easy or how hard was your attempt at this new prayer format?

Breath Prayer

Breath prayers are another way to become more aware of God's presence. The Holy Spirit is as near as the air we breathe.

A common way to practice breath prayer is silently repeating a single-line prayer with each breath. As you inhale address God with something like, "Jesus, Son of God." Then, as you exhale, express a request to God such as, "be merciful to me, a sinner." Other examples are, "Creator God, allow me to see your beauty around me," "Holy Spirit, let me feel your joy," "O Lord, show me your way," and "Holy One, heal me." Repeat the prayer with each breath for several minutes. Listen for God.

Multi-sensory Prayer

Engaging other senses in prayer proves effective for many. Through the centuries, Christians have looked at candles, smelled incense, and held onto beads, crosses, and more as they prayed.

A creative way to do something similar is to pray while working a piece of clay in your hands and contemplating [your humanity and sinfulness](#). The clay reminds us that God is constantly shaping us into vessels of the Holy Spirit. As Jeremiah watched a potter shape and reshape clay, he heard the voice of God, "Like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in mine" (Jeremiah 18:6 CEB).

(To be continued next week)

Carry the cross  and follow me.
Luke 14:27, NRSV