

Mount Pisgah A.M.E Church

Rev. Jay B. Broadnax, Pastor

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Developing Christian Character Building Blocks for Christian Living Quieting Our Spirits Through Meditation

The crisis that we are in has actually FORCED to isolate to some extent (although we're doing our best to stay connected.) However the opportunity that this gives us is to spend some time drawing nearer to the Lord.

Three great weapons of our adversary are:

- Noise
- Hurry
- Crowds
- Ever increasing speed and inertia

Quieting our spirits through not just prayer, but meditation on God's Word and listening (allowing God to speak) is a way that we can turn the volume down, slow the pace, and increase our focus and peace.

What IS Christian meditation?

- Christian meditation is an attempt to turn down the noise and distraction, to leave aside the challenges that face us and worries that plague us, so that our eyes, ears, and hearts can be completely focused on God.
- Meditating is spending time in the quietness of God's presence.
- Meditation allows God access to our inner spiritual heart and mind

What Christian Meditation is NOT?

- Eastern Meditation –an attempt to empty the mind
- Buddhism – Attempts to escape the pains of life and be caught up into a suspended bliss
- Transcendental Meditation - an attempt to detach from oneself, or lose personal identity, or to merge with some sort of universal mind.
- It is dangerous to empty our minds, hearts, and/or spirits without having something there to fill it (Luke 11:24-26)
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Meditation has been a classical part of Christian devotion. It is an essential part of scripture

- Genesis 24:63
- Psalm 63:6
- Psalm 119:148
- Psalm 1:2
- Revelation 1:10 – John was in “in the Spirit on the Lord's day” when he saw his great vision

Some of the greatest Christian thinkers in history write about listening to God as being primary (St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, Thomas Merton).

Is meditation impractical in our fast paced, 21st Century world?

- Meditation is the only thing that can sufficiently get us off of “the fleshly” and create a cavity in our spirits deep enough for God to pour in God's greatest insights.

- Some of the greatest social activists of our history have come out of the Quaker tradition, in which “listening silences” are primary
- Meditation will often yield insights that are deeply practical

Meditation is more than just psychological manipulation; it can set the atmosphere for communion with God.

- Requires “will you catch me?” kind of trust
- Requires a passionate desire to see God as more than just a silent, background presence

Do we REALLY want to talk to God *personally*?

- Often we don’t. We want a “go-between” (Exodus 20:19, 1 Samuel 8:7)
- We don’t want God to see us “undressed” (Genesis 2:25; Genesis 3:6-7, 10-11; Isaiah 6:1-5)
- The noise in our lives is really “spiritual anesthesia,” it keeps us medicated from the pain of confronting ourselves for who we really are.
- Meditation calls us boldly enter into the living presence of God ourselves.

Do we really believe that God will *speak to our hearts*, beyond what our minds conjure up?

How do we meditate?

- You can’t learn it from a teaching. The only way to do it is to DO IT.
- We have to decide it’s important.

These are some suggestions:

1. Set aside time. If Muslims can put EVERYTHING down three times a day to pray, Christians ought to be able to set aside some time prepare, listen, and talk to God.
2. Find a place that is free from interruption and distraction
3. Perhaps identify some music that is non-distracting. Sometimes instrumental music can be best. You don’t want to focus on the music, but use the music to help banish stressful thoughts
4. Be in a relaxing position that does not cause stress. Some sit, some lie prostrate, some walk
5. Set your mind on things above (Colossians 3:1) – Consider a favorite scripture and picture what it describes in your mind. One suggestion is to think deeply about how much The Lord loves you.
6. Release concerns – verbally say “I release this to the Lord.” Either that or write them down on a “parking lot” piece of paper and leave them aside.
7. Exhale/Inhale exercise– Exhale “this concern,” Inhale “God’s peace.” Exhale fears, inhale God’s power
8. Recite scriptural promises back to God
9. Identify a Bible story and see yourself IN it. For example, See yourself at the resurrection and imagine Jesus talking to you personally about what God wants for your life.
10. Imagine yourself walking (or journeying) with Jesus, communing “friend with friend.” Walking further and further away with Jesus from your lived situation until it’s just you and him.
11. A final form of meditation is to see the events of our time and seek to see them in light of the kingdom of God.

For any serious disciple of Christ who desires for their walk to have a degree of depth, we must stop skirting the surface and running from task to task. We have to allow God’s Spirit into the caverns of our very being. As we allow God into the depths of our soul, we will be invited to explore the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9,10)