



LOAVES & FISHES

We Have Here Only Five Loves and Two Fishes

A contemplative, embodied experience of noticing, offering, and receiving

Entering the Moment

You may sit, walk, or stand near a window, wherever your body feels most supported.

Take a moment to notice your posture. Let your attention arrive in the present moment at a pace that feels steady for you.

A Brief Breath Practice: “Receiving What Is Here”

Let one hand rest on your chest or lap... wherever you feel most at ease.

- Inhale as if receiving what is already here.
- Exhale as if releasing anything asking for space.
- Continue for a few breaths. There is nothing to achieve; simply noticing the movement of breath and whatever rises in awareness.

When you feel ready, offer this simple opening:

“Here I am, God.”

Scripture Reading | Matthew 14:13–21

Before reading, allow a few moments to notice what is present in your body... any tension, warmth, emotions, or quiet places. Nothing needs to shift. Awareness itself is a sacred offering.

Read the passage slowly, either now or after your movement practice.

Embodied Noticing

For a few minutes, look around your space or on your walk. Notice:

- shapes
- sounds
- movement
- colors
- anything your attention lingers on

Let your noticing be unhurried and instinctive.

If anything stirs... comfort, resistance, numbness... simply acknowledge it with compassion.

This practice reflects the heart of the Loaves and Fishes story: noticing what we already carry, even when it seems like “only a little.”

First Reading | Listening for a Word or Phrase

Read the passage once.

Pause after each sentence.

Notice if a word, phrase, or image catches your attention, even something small or unexpected.

Rest with that word for a moment, repeating it quietly or holding it in your awareness.

Consider: “*What begins to shimmer in me as I sit with this word?*”

Second Reading | Listening Within Your Life

Read the passage again, slowly.

You may imagine yourself in the scene... standing among the crowd, sitting in the grass, watching the disciples, or noticing Jesus’ compassion.

There is no correct place to be.

Consider:

- “*What rises in me as I notice this scene unfolding?*”
- “*What begins to surface in my life as this story touches it?*”
- “*What might this word or image be meeting in me today?*”

Allow the Spirit’s movement to be spacious and unforced.

Third Reading | Response of the Heart

Read the passage a third time.

Notice what begins to unfold inside you... desires, questions, longings, resistance, hope, sorrow, or stillness.

You may explore:

- *“What begins to take shape in me as I remain with this story?”*
- *“What feels like it wants to be offered or held?”*
- *“What movement of compassion or clarity starts to emerge?”*

You may choose to write, move, draw, or rest in silence.

This is not a moment of performance or self-correction... only honest presence before God, who receives every offering, even the smallest fragments.

Closing Prayer

God of abundance,
thank You for meeting me here,
in the little I notice,
the little I carry,
and the places where scarcity feels close.

Thank You for the compassion revealed in Jesus,
for the nourishment that reaches each person,
and for the baskets of fragments gathered with care.

Shape my life in the pattern of Your love,
unforced, steady, and free,
so that whatever I offer, however small,
becomes part of Your work of healing and hope in the world.
Amen.

Optional Reflection After the Practice

Later in the day, you might revisit this experience and ask:

- *“What continues to unfold from this story?”*
- *“What small offering from my life seems to be held in a new light?”*
- *“What seems to nourish me as I recall this moment?”*

Let these reflections be invitations, not expectations.

Footnote: This adapted framework draws from the biblical theology of Christian formation and theological anthropology, with conceptual influence from the teachings of Tim Mackie (BibleProject), Barbara Holmes, Howard Thurman, Lisa Sharon Harper, Sheila Wise Rowe, Tammy Marshall, and Adele Calhoun.