



WELCOME PRAYER

A Practice of Consent & Presence

Breath Practice

Arriving in the Presence That Holds All Things

Find a posture that allows your body to feel supported.
Feet grounded. Back resting. Hands placed where contact brings steadiness.
If closing your eyes feels safe, you may. If not, soften your gaze.

Notice the places where your body meets the chair or floor.
Feel the weight you are carrying. Nothing needs to be adjusted yet.

Take a slow breath in through your nose.

Let the air reach whatever is present. Calm. Restlessness. Numbness. Irritation. Hope. Fatigue.

Exhale through your mouth.

Release the effort to perform this moment well.

Take another breath.

On the inhale, silently say: Here.

On the exhale, silently say: With You.

Allow the rhythm to continue for several breaths.

If it feels supportive, place a hand on your chest or abdomen.
Notice warmth, pressure, or subtle movement.
The Spirit of God meets you in flesh and breath, not apart from them.

There is space here for strength, protest, grief, longing, and courage.
There is space here for you.

If at any point this practice feels overwhelming, you may open your eyes, shift your posture, or pause.
Choice remains with you.

Prayer

Welcome, welcome, welcome.

I welcome what rises in this moment.
I welcome thoughts and memories.
I welcome emotions and sensations.
I welcome the parts of me that feel confident and the parts that feel hidden.

Nothing here surprises God.
Nothing here disqualifies me from love.

I release my grasp on security that depends on control.
I release my grasp on approval that depends on performance.
I release my grasp on outcomes that depend on certainty.

I consent to God's presence in this exact place.
I open to grace already at work within me.

If resistance appears, I welcome that too.
If anger surfaces, I make room for its voice.
If sorrow rises, I allow it to breathe.

I am not required to change what I feel.
I am invited to meet it with Christ.

Let a word or phrase rise that feels honest.

Trust. Here. Held. Seen. Courage.
Allow it to settle somewhere in your body.

Scripture for Reflection

Psalm 139:7 -10

*Where can I go from your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,*

*even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.*

Or Isaiah 30:15

*In returning and rest you shall be saved;
in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.*

Hear these words as **pathways toward rest**, not requirements to achieve.

Journal Invitations

These are openings for reflection, not tasks to complete.

Pause wherever something begins to move.

1. As you sit with the truth that no place is outside God's presence, what begins to stir beneath the surface of your awareness?
2. When you imagine "the heights" and "the depths" within your own story, what memories, sensations, or images start to come into view?
3. Where in your body do you sense companionship right now, even if faint or surprising?
4. As you release control without withdrawing care, what new posture toward yourself starts to form?
5. What part of you longs to be accompanied rather than corrected?
6. When you consider God's guiding hand, what kind of guidance feels life-giving rather than constricting?
7. What quiet courage might be gathering as you practice welcoming rather than managing your interior world?

If writing feels supportive, let words flow without editing.

If stillness feels more honest, remain there.

Discernment often unfolds beneath language.

When you are ready, return to your breath.

Inhale awareness.

Exhale consent.

Let your body register that you are not alone.

Blessing

May the Presence who formed you from dust and breath
meet you in every height and every depth.

May the Christ who entered human vulnerability
honor your strength, your questions, and your limits.

May the Spirit who hovered over chaos
steady you when old memories surface
and strengthen you when courage is required.

May you discover that welcome is not passivity
but participation in Love that refuses to abandon you.

And as you move back into your day,
may your body remember what your mind forgets:
you are accompanied.
you are known.
you are held in steadfast mercy.
Amen.

Footnote: This framework draws from biblical theology and Christian formation, informed by insights from Barbara Holmes, Howard Thurman, Lisa Sharon Harper, Sheila Wise Rowe, Lisa Fields (Jude3 Project), Father Thomas Keating, and Tim Mackie (BibleProject).