



SACRED PAUSE

Sacred Pause

A Divine-Centered Practice of Presence, Awareness, and Compassion

Life rarely slows itself. Our bodies and stories carry weight and wonder at the same time. Work, injustice, beauty, grief, desire, fatigue, resistance, love. Much of it moves beneath the surface. The Sacred Pause makes room to notice what is already present.

Throughout Scripture, moments of stopping shape the people of God. The Psalms name Selah, an intentional interruption within praise and lament. Psalms holds these pauses inside songs of protest and trust. In the Gospels, Jesus withdraws, prays, attends, and then responds with clarity and courage. The pause is not escape. It is participation in reality with God.

Biblical theology presents humanity as embodied image bearers, animated by breath. In Genesis, divine breath fills dust with life. In Luke chapter 4, Jesus proclaims good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed, rooted in Isaiah 61. The Spirit forms people who are attentive before reactive, grounded before acting. The Sacred Pause honors the space between instinct and response. In that space, awareness becomes a doorway to communion and discernment.

This practice does not aim to control emotion or produce calm. It invites honest attention. Awareness itself becomes prayer.

Entering the Pause

Choose a posture that works for your body today. Sitting, standing, walking, or lying down are all welcome. If closing your eyes feels unsafe, keep them open and rest your gaze on something steady.

A Breath Practice

- 1. Notice contact points.**

Feet on the floor. Back against a chair. Air on your skin.

2. Inhale at a natural pace.

Sense the breath entering your body.

3. Exhale slowly.

Imagine creating interior space, not to push anything away, but to allow what is here to be here.

4. Continue for three to five breaths.

Let your body set the rhythm.

If helpful, hold a brief phrase in your awareness:

Here I am.

You are near.

Make space within me.

You may choose different words, or none at all.

Breath in Scripture is not merely oxygen. It signifies Spirit, life, presence. As you breathe, you participate in that gift.

Receiving What Is Here

Notice what begins to surface.

Perhaps a tightening in your chest.

Perhaps relief.

Perhaps numbness.

Perhaps anger connected to injustice.

Perhaps longing.

Perhaps nothing identifiable.

Whatever arises belongs in this moment. Trauma, stress, and systemic harm can make inner attention feel unsettling. If overwhelm increases, orient outward. Name five things you see. Feel your feet pressing into the ground. Return when and if you are ready. Choice remains yours.

The Sacred Pause is not performance. It is companionship with your own soul before God.

Scripture repeatedly affirms divine nearness to the weary and burdened. Matthew 11 speaks of rest for the heavy laden. Psalms 34 names God's closeness to the brokenhearted. Luke 4 proclaims liberation and restoration. The pause allows you to encounter that nearness within your actual life, not an idealized one.

Invitational Reflection

Allow these questions to open space rather than demand answers. You may linger with one, many, or none.

- What seems to be stirring beneath the surface as you remain here?
- What inner movement is asking for your attention or respect?
- What story within your body longs to be witnessed rather than corrected?
- What form of courage or clarity feels close at hand?
- What grief, anger, or hope carries sacred weight in this moment?
- What sense of divine presence or absence shapes your experience right now?
- What truth within you desires acknowledgment without argument?
- What might be unfolding in your heart as you rest in this awareness?

Let insight arrive in its own time. Silence can also be faithful.

Weaving the Pause into Daily Life

The Sacred Pause does not require extended solitude. It can take root in ordinary transitions.

- Before responding in a charged conversation.
- After reading troubling news.
- Before pressing record or going live, feeling your breath and the weight of your body.
- While washing dishes or commuting.
- As you gather eggs, milk, harvest, plant, or water, feeling soil or straw in your hands.
- When joy or grief surprises you.
- When emptying trash or resetting a room, recognizing the unseen service you offer.
- Before stepping into a call, noticing your breath inside your uniform or gear.
- As your hand rests over your heart during overwhelm.
- As you see the consequences of conflict, allowing awareness of what surfaces in you without judgment.
- When someone's name comes to mind and you hold them before God.

These brief interruptions form a people who respond with integrity rather than impulse. Over time, awareness reshapes action. The Spirit forms love that is not rushed and justice that is not detached from compassion.

A Closing Moment

Return once more to your breath.

Notice the steadiness or movement within your body.

Acknowledge whatever remains.

You are not required to leave this pause improved.

You are invited to remain real.

You might offer a simple prayer:

God, open my awareness to hope taking root within me and around me.

Stay as long as you need.

Leave when you are ready.

The Spirit continues to meet you in the next step.

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), and Tim Mackie (BibleProject).