

Bringing Your Body to Prayer Resources

Websites for Guided Meditations of Body Awareness:

ULCA Mindful Awareness Research Center—free guided meditations.

<https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>

Stop Breathe Think—free and paid guided meditations, includes check-in with body before and after

<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/meditations/>

Into Balance: A Wellbeing Community/Lincoln NE. Free guided meditations, info on Meditation Based Stress Reduction (ask me about my experience with MBSR)

<https://www.intobalance.us/meditations>

Scholarly Articles about Body Awareness:

Lundvik Gyllensten, et al. *Embodied identity—A deeper understanding of body awareness.*

Physiotherapy Theory and Practice, 26(7):439–446, 2010

Price, et al 2017. *Scale of Body Connection: A multi-sample construct validation study.* PLoS ONE 12(10): e0184757.

***We Awaken in Christ's Body* by Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022)**

We awaken in Christ's body
As Christ awakens our bodies,
And my poor hand is Christ, He enters
My foot, and is infinitely me.

Where all our body, all over,
Every most hidden part of it,
Is realized in joy as Him,
And He makes us, utterly, real,

I move my hand, and wonderfully
My hand becomes Christ, becomes all of Him
(for God is indivisibly
Whole, seamless in His Godhood).

And everything that is hurt, everything
That seemed to us dark, harsh, shameful,
Maimed, ugly, irreparably
Damaged, is in Him transformed

I move my foot, and at once
He appears like a flash of lightning.
Do my words seem blasphemous? Then
Open your heart to him.

And recognized as whole, as lovely, and
radiant in His light
He awakens as the Beloved
In every last part of our body.

And let yourself receive the one
Who is opening to you so deeply.
For if we genuinely love Him,
We wake up inside Christ's body

Mechtild of Magdeburg

(1207-1282)

As love grows and expands in the soul,
 It rises eagerly to God
 And overflows
 towards the Glory
 Which bends towards it.
The love melts through the soul
Into the senses
 So that the body too might share
In it,
For Love
 Is drawn
Into all things

Julian of Norwich

(1342-1416)

As the body is clothed in cloth
And the muscles in the skin
And the bones in the muscles
And the heart in the chest,

So are we, body and soul,
Clothed in the Goodness of God
And enclosed.

God is the means
Whereby our Substance
And our Sensuality
Are kept together
So as to never be apart
Because of the beautiful oneing
That was made by God
Between the body and soul

It must be that we will be restored
From double death.

F.I.R.S.T. Steps to spiritual practice (by Carol Olson)

F—Faithful: the commitment to re-starting, getting up after “falling down”; the promise to keep trying
I—Intentional: Not haphazard, but bringing the practice to my conscience mind, and to do any needed preparation for it, whether that requires a few seconds or many minutes.

R—Regular: whatever that means to me—it might be every day, twice a week, or whenever I see a tree. To be gentle with myself if I am not “regular” with my spiritual practice. It’s ok.

S—Sacred: set apart, special. I’m careful with my thoughts, body position or posture, movement and attention to my breath. It’s not necessarily only a physical “space”, but a mindset.

T—Time: when I can ‘lose’ a sense of time when I enjoy something fully, to savor an experience with my whole being. Perhaps I set a timer so that I can let go of checking the time.

"Placing the cross on oneself" (Christian Orthodox tradition)

We place our thumb and first two fingers together in a point, and our last two fingers flat against our palm. The three fingers together represent the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the two fingers in the palm represent the two natures of Christ (Divine *and* Human). We touch our forehead, then our belly, tracing the vertical part of the cross. From our belly, we bring our hand up to our right shoulder, touching it. We finish placing the cross on our self by touching our left shoulder.

<http://www.orthodox.net/articles/about-crossing-oneself.html>

Breath Prayers:

Jesus Prayer. "Lord Jesus Christ" (while breathing in), "have mercy on me" (while breathing out). This prayer dates back to the Desert Fathers of the 5th century CE.

Other Breath Prayer examples:

(Inhale/exhale):

Holy One/Heal me

Holy Wisdom/Guide me

Jesus/Remember me

1 John 4:16

So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

Ps 139:13-14

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Romans 8:26-28:

Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. The Spirit does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. The Spirit knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

Biospiritual Focusing:

<https://www.biospiritual.org/why-biospiritual-focusing/>

St. Benedict Center, Schuyler, NE--the Midwest Networking Site for Biospiritual Institute.

<https://christthekingpriory.com/programs-retreats>

Books for reference:

"Prayer and Our Bodies", by Flora Slosson Wuellner

"Fully Human, Fully Divine", by Michael Casey

"Pray all ways", by Edward Hays

"Savoring God: Praying with all our senses" by Kathleen Finley

"Praying with Our Hands: 21 practices of Embodied Prayer from the World's Spiritual Traditions" by Jon M. Sweeney

"Praying With the Body" (book and DVD) by Roy De Leon

"The Wisdom of the Body: A Contemplative Journey to Wholeness for Women" by Christine Valters Paintner

"The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma" by Bessel Van der Kolk, 2014.

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