

A Prayer Walk

[which can be done sitting in your chair]



You may like to take a walk outside, or you could walk around the inside of a building, or even sit and focus on the Prayer Pauses.

1. As you begin, be aware of the rhythm of your breathing. Concentrate on it for a few moments, keeping it steady and not too fast. If you are walking think how your breathing fits in with the rhythm of your steps. When you feel at ease with your breathing, look around you and take in what you see. Look at the area whether rural, urban or indoors. If it is a familiar place, try and see it with fresh eyes. What do you notice most? Is it something familiar? Or somewhere new? Are there any striking features? If so, pause and keep your eyes on them for a few minutes.

Prayer Pause

Think about the things you have noticed – people, creatures, the natural world, the surroundings of familiarity. How do the elements before you have a bearing on one another? Consider the things we all use, where the raw materials come from and how we adapt and use them to complement our lives.

2. Focus again on the rhythm of breathing and/or walking. Try to be aware of everything around you. Look in front, behind, at the sides, above and on the ground. Look especially for anything you have never noticed before, or that seems unusual and out of place.

Prayer Pause

Pause if you notice something at any point. Consider how it got to where it is, and how it might have got there. Does it seem to fit where it is? Does it have a chance to thrive there? Or will it always seem out of place? Think where you are aware of people who seem out of place; creatures who are not in their natural environment and plants that have been introduced to places where they do not naturally grow.

3. Still maintain your breathing rhythm. If you are alone, think about yourself. How are you feeling? Are you at ease? Or, unsettled? Do you feel confident or diffident? Is life generally consistent, or are there worries and upheaval? Do you feel there is success in your life, or disappointment? Only you will know...

Prayer Pause

Aloud or in your head give 'voice' to the thoughts that are uppermost in your mind.

4. If you are walking with a friend[s], you may like to share with one another the things you appreciate about your friendship. Consider the things you have in common, the personal qualities that help to cement your relationship. If you are alone, bring to mind, one at a time, your friends. Consider what it is that draws you together as friends.

Prayer Pause

Thank God for friendships, and the support we gain from one another; the times when you laugh together; the times that you let your feelings out and cry together; the skills you admire in one another; the knowledge that they will be there for you; the joy of a close relationship, even when not physically close to each other.

5. As you continue, focus on one or two happy memories, or think of a time when you felt most happy. Consider whether there are particular events, places, songs that trigger this memory. In the busyness of life we can sometimes become caught in the frenzy of it all.

Prayer Pause

Give thanks that we can have happy memories to focus on even in times of challenge. Ask God to remind you of happy times and events that relieve pressure and anxiety.

6. Moving on be alert for places to pause – an open view, a gate, a seat, a glimpse of something beautiful or intriguing, a picture or an ornament. It may be large or small. Take time to look and appreciate what you see. Look closely, there is no need to rush.

Prayer Pause

Be thankful for the beauty around you; the infinite variety from large vistas to the almost invisible parts of a flower, or the strength of an ant.

7. Continue until you find a quiet place. Stop and listen. What sounds can you hear? Traffic? Water? Birdsong? Wind in the trees? Whistle of the kettle? Hum of a machine? Consider how the sounds affect you. Do they affect your mood? Our world can often be a noisy place. Which sounds do you find irritating and which soothing?

Prayer Pause

Reflect on the range of sounds around you, the natural and the man made, and the reasons for each one as you perceive them.

8. Now focus on your feet and the surface under them. Do you make sounds as your feet move? Listen for the rustling of leaves, the crunch of gravel, the squish of wet grass, the squelch of mud. Do your shoes click on the ground or are your steps almost silent? Think about your impact on the environment. It is impossible for us to do anything without touching, lightly or firmly, the world around us. We move it as we move, use its resources for our perceived needs, take because we desire, and discard often without thought.

Prayer Pause

Loving God help us to be aware of the impact we have on all around us, and guide us away from mismanagement. Help us to be conscious of disregarding your creation, of needlessly wasting resources. Lead us to greater care and respect for all creation.

9. As you near the end of this Prayer Walk, consider what you are looking forward to next, and what you will be grateful for today. It may be warmth or coolness, depending on the day; refreshment and rest, or planning your next project.

Prayer

Lord, you know me through and through – every thought, every action, every skill, every dream and plan; the big ideas and the small thoughts. Help me to be all that I can be, trusting in you as my friend and guide. Amen