

**Pre-Presbytery Workshop**  
**Christian Spiritual Formation**  
**Christian Spiritual Disciplines/Christian Spiritual Practices**  
**Christian Spiritual Direction**  
**June 15, 2024**

**Opening Prayer**

**I. Defining Christian Spiritual Formation, Christian Spiritual Disciplines/Christian Spiritual Practices, and Christian Spiritual Direction**

For the past thirty or so years, there has been a growing interest in Christian spiritual formation and its cohorts, Christian spiritual disciplines, and spiritual direction.

“Language is important as it “frames our thoughts and conversations,” (so) it is important to have working/shared definitions as we begin to talk about this topic today.

“**Christian spiritual formation** is the process of being formed into the image of Christ through intimacy with God by the power of the Spirit.”

**Christian spiritual disciplines** are also known as Christian spiritual practices. Disciplines is the older word. It emphasizes the understanding that the practitioner “is in pursuit of a goal.”

Some people believe that the word “disciplines” wrongly implies rigidity and so prefer using the word practices. Today, we will use the word “practices.”

“Christian spiritual practices are the how of Christian Spiritual formation. They invite us to be attentive to God and what the Holy Spirit wants to do in and for us.”

“Christian spiritual Practices keep Christ as the object of our love and worship.”

“Anything you do to help fix your eye on beholding Christ can be considered a practice.” Brother Lawrence exemplifies this understanding.

**Christian spiritual direction** is the practice of “... discerning God’s movement and listening for God’s voice in relationship with ...” soul friend, a spiritual director.

“(Christian) Spiritual Formation is the process of being formed into the image of Christ, and Christian Spiritual Practices are the ways that help us in the process, of which Christian Spiritual Direction is one specific practice.”

Information comes from *Defining Spiritual Formation, Spiritual Disciplines, and Spiritual Direction* by Rachael Hehr at <https://www.curateministries.org/curateblog/2020/2/22/defining-spiritual-formation-spiritual-disciplines-and-spiritual-direction>

## II. Theological Underpinnings of Christian Spiritual Formation

1. Every person is formed by the spiritual realm or social-cultural factors. This process continues throughout life. (Willard 2002)

Paul recognizes this and says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2

2. Being conformed to the image of God, the likeness of Christ, keeps spiritual formation from becoming a fad or a secular activity. The Holy Spirit is the one who helps the believer grow into Christ’s image.

3. Spiritual Formation is the “process of being shaped by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Christ, filled with love for God and the World.” (A Call for Spiritual Formation, 2009).

4. Many compare Christian Spiritual Formation to sanctification, which is “a progressive and gradual process of maturation” (Wikipedia, Spiritual Formation) of growing in faith, hope, and love of Christ.

5. “Spiritual Formation is a rather general term referring to all attempts, means, instruction, and disciplines intended toward deepening of ... furtherance of spiritual growth.” (Gerald G. May, *Care of the Spirit*).

6. “We are all being constantly formed into something, and we’re in an ongoing process of becoming. Whatever we behold, shapes us.” (Ruth Haley Brown, *Spiritual Formation Primer*).

7. Christian Spiritual Formation has been a part of Christianity from the very beginning. There are numerous references to it in the Christian Testament, both as an attribution to Christ’s way of being in the world and a call to conform our lives to Jesus.

Below is a list of scripture passages that point to the importance of Christian Spiritual Formation. The list is not exhaustive, nor does it include passages that point to Spiritual Formation in the Hebrew Testament.

Colossians 1:9-10	Matthew 13:31-32	1 John 2:1-29
Colossians 2:6-7	Philippians 1:6	1 Peter 2:1-3
Ephesians 2:10	Philippians 1:9	1 Peter 2:1-25
Ephesians 3:17-19	Philippians 2:5	2 Peter 1:58
Ephesians 4:11-16	Philippians 3:10	2 Peter 3:18
Ephesians 4:22-24	Romans 5:26	1 Timothy 4:15

Galatians 5:22-23	Romans 6:23	2 Timothy 3:16-17
Hebrews 5:12-	Romans 8:29	
Hebrews 6:1-2	Romans 12:1-2	
Matthew 6:33	2 Corinthians 13:5-7	

8. “Research of 1,000 churches shows that 25% of the membership is stalled spiritually, because of a lack of spiritual formation ... to direct them in their spiritual development.” (Hawkins, Greg L, Parkinson, Cally, *Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal about Spiritual Growth*).

9. Transformation happens both individually and communally. God comes to all people, and God comes to each of us.

### III. Brief History of Spiritual Formation and Practices

The early church, which met in the homes of Christ’s followers, went through periods of acceptance, toleration, and persecution until 313 CE when Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the religion of the realm.

This change in the Church’s status resulted in the secularization of the church and gave rise to Christian Monasticism, which was a protest against the church’s secularization. Both men and women flocked to the desert to devote their lives to study, silence, and solitude. They became known as the Desert Fathers (known also as Abbas) and Desert Mothers (also known as Ammas). **“They went to the deserts of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine to ... find a different way of being a Christian in the world.”** (Father Brad Karelius, *The Desert Mothers: Amma Syncretica* for a workshop on the Desert Mothers for Sisters of Saint Joseph, 6.4.22).

Thomas Merton said, “It should seem to us much stranger than it does, that this paradoxical flight from the world attained its greatest dimensions . . . when the ‘world’ officially became Christian.”

Over time, they attracted many to their way of life.

One Desert Father, Abba Moses, said, “Sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.”

Is he talking about his cave, scripture, his heart?

Perhaps he is talking about all three.

**“The desert was not just a place, a physical location, but a type of Christian experience....”**  
(Father Brad Karelius, same reference).

It was the experience of seeking God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength that all of you might be transformed into a new being,

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said,

“The renewal of the church will come from a new type of monasticism, which only has in common with the old an uncompromising allegiance to the Sermon on the Mount.” (Letter to his brother, Karl-Friedrick, 1.14.1935)

Benedict of Nursia, who lived from 480- 543 CE, is known as the Father of Western Monasticism. He was the founder of the Order of St. Benedict, the Benedictines.

For the next 700-800 years, all church reform movements were “...an effort to recover the original purity of the Benedictine practices.” (DBU, Dr. Philip Irving Mitchell, Overview of Medieval Monasteries) These reform movements resulted in the establishment of new monasteries, the Cluny, the Carthusians, the Cistercians, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans. **In the following centuries, church reformation continued to flow out of the monasteries into the church.**

Mysticism is a part of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Mysticism is understood as an encounter with the Holy, as an experience of an immediate, direct experience of God.

The Hebrew Testament is filled with many descriptions of such encounters. Both Moses’ encounters with God, the book of Psalms, Ezekiel, and Elijah all describe mystical experiences. Other examples?

Mysticism is part and parcel of Christianity from its very beginning. The early church understood that “Christianity was a religion of the Spirit.” To cite a few examples:

1. The synoptic gospels describe Jesus as having intimate contact with God.
2. Jesus foretold that the Spirit would be active in the lives of his followers.
3. Both Paul’s letters and John’s gospel illustrate their connection to God through the Spirit.

“Out of the deserts came the first monasteries, intentional communities of Christians who sought to give their entire lives to God. As this movement caught on throughout the Christian world, it became a natural home for great mystics and visionaries; and, indeed, **nearly all of the great mystics between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries lived as monks or nuns.**”

(Jim Baker, Sacred Structures, “Does Christianity Really Have Mystical Foundations?”, [sacredstructures.org](http://sacredstructures.org)).

### Kataphatic and Apophatic Mysticism

There are two complementary streams of Christian mysticism.

1. Kataphatic mysticism, also known as the way of affirmation, “...affirms that which is revealed and apparent...” It deals with what is known/can be known about God. “... (the) Christian kataphatic mystical tradition is seen through the prism of the ‘many’: words, colors, song, complexity, multiplicity of images and ideas all intertwine, mutually illuminating one another while celebrating the richness of beauty ... in diversity.”

2. Apophatic mysticism, the way of negation or the via negativa, has to do with that which “... remains concealed, hidden from view. The apophatic strand of Christian mysticism understands God

“ . . . as the One – beyond words and beyond all human thought and idea.”

images, transcending every category...

([http://www.idysinger.com/@themes/apoph-/01\\_apo-kata.htm](http://www.idysinger.com/@themes/apoph-/01_apo-kata.htm)).

“Kataphatic” prayer has content; it uses words, images, symbols, and ideas. “Apophatic” prayer has no content. It means emptying the mind of words and ideas and simply resting in the presence of God.

(Jim Manney, *Kataphatic or Apophatic Prayer?* [https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/kataphatic-or-apophatic-prayer/#:~:text=%E2%](https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/kataphatic-or-apophatic-prayer/#:~:text=%E2%80%9D%20prayer%20has%20content%3B,Centering%20prayer%20is%20apophatic.)

[80%9CKataphatic%E2%80%9D%20prayer%20has%20content%3B,Centering%20prayer%20is%20apophatic.](https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/kataphatic-or-apophatic-prayer/#:~:text=%E2%80%9D%20prayer%20has%20content%3B,Centering%20prayer%20is%20apophatic.))Omit

## Examples of Kataphatic and Apophatic Prayer

### Kataphatic Prayer

Public worship

Private devotion

Ignatian Spirituality

Lectio Divina

### Apophatic prayer

Prayer of the Quiet- Sitting into the essence of our being in silence, relinquishing thought, quieting our spirit, and inviting God to sit in the silence and stillness with us. If/when thoughts arise, let them go and return to stillness. “**The prayer of quiet draws us ever deeper into the Mystery...**” we call God. (Richard Rohr, Center for Action and Contemplation, “The God Beyond What We Know”). Numbering among the theologians/mystics who embraced the via negativa are Meister Eckhart, John of the Cross, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Karl Barth, and C.S. Lewis.

### Early Mystics

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, Augustine of Hippo speaks of God as “other, completely other and writes of two encounters with God. Following Augustine, other well-known mystics are

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153 ), Hildegarde of Bingen (1098-1179), Richard St. Victor (1110-1173), Francis of Assisi (d.1226)and his sister, Clare of Assisi (1194-1253), Meister Eckhart (1260-1327), Marguerite of Porete (d.1310), Julian of Norwich (1342-?), Catherine of Sienna (1347-1380), *The Cloud of Unknowing* (late 14<sup>th</sup> century), Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582), John of the Cross (1542-1591).

All contributed to and enlarged the understanding of the nature and purpose of mysticism.

“New Mysticism” (B. McGinn’s phrase) began about 1200 and was marked by the understanding that it was open to all, not just the educated elite, did not require retreat from the world, and was written in the vernacular, so it included women.

(B. McGinn, *Acta Theologica*. vol.35n2Bloemfontein 2015, “Mysticism and the Reformation: A Brief Survey, [https://scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S101587582015000400004#:~:text=While%20the%20mystical%20element%20in,Harnack%2C%20and%20others%20once%20argued.](https://scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S101587582015000400004#:~:text=While%20the%20mystical%20element%20in,Harnack%2C%20and%20others%20once%20argued.))

### Martin Luther

Both Luther’s early and mature works exhibit aspects of the mystical tradition, but he “never wrote a mystical work in the sense of a commentary or treatise designed to guide the soul through the various practices designed to reach loving union with God.” He did, however, “stress the need for inner experience of God as the foundation of true faith, and an emphasis on humility...while waiting for the grace of God.” And he did stress union with God. Still, Luther insisted that “...faith (not experience) as our primary attitude towards God. (B. McGinn).

### John Calvin

John Calvin “...took a more negative view of mysticism than Luther....” He did have a “...strong teaching on the union between Christ and believers, which he was even willing to call a ‘mystical union.’” Still, mysticism was less important in the reformed churches. (B. McGinn).

### Puritans

“Puritanism was, in essence, a devotional movement that sought to renew the spiritual life of individuals and the church. (It had)... a strong emphasis on ...piety....(The word) Puritan was ... a pejorative word of slander or rebuke, and the Puritans themselves often preferred the term the godly... Puritanism was a devotional movement rooted in religious experience. The Puritans ...

Approached spiritual disciplines by dividing them into three categories: secret, private, and public.” Secret were an individual’s private practices, private were small group practices, and public were practices done in a large group or worship service. These practices were devoted to maturing in Christ. Puritans believed that “spiritual disciplines were any practice that awakened, strengthened, or deepened a person’s relationship with the Triune God.” Puritans believed that spiritual practices done over time create a reciprocal relationship between God and the believer. They also acknowledge that practices “...cannot save a person, but they let the soul into Christ.” Interestingly, the Puritans sought to balance the head with the heart, to balance the intellect with the affect. (This integration of head and heart is deeply rooted in Christian Spirituality. One important Puritan theologian of the 17th century, Ambrose, described meditation as beginning in the intellect and ending in the heart.) Puritans recognized that transformation “...was dependent upon the inner working through the Holy Spirit in the human heart.” (Tom Schwanda, *Puritan Publications*, ‘Hearts Sweetly Refreshed: Puritan Practices Then and Now,’ [www.puritanpublicatons.com](http://www.puritanpublicatons.com))

### Quakers

“Quaker silence is an invitation to experience God within ourselves. George Fox said, ‘Be staid in the principle of God in thee ... that thou wilt find Him to be God at hand.’” Quakers sought to have a direct experience of God and realized there are many ways to do this ~

in nature, meditation, contemplative waiting, religious rituals, reading sacred texts, service to others, and singing hymns.

Rufus Jones (1863-1948), the foremost Quaker scholar, wrote, ‘Spiritual ministry, in this or any age, comes through a prepared person who has been learning to catch the mind of the spirit...’ Quaker faith and practice involves moving ” ... toward God, being open to God, being willing to meet God and being guided by our experiences of God.” Robert Atchley, Friends Journal, “Mystical Experience, the Bedrock of Quaker Faith.”

John Wesley

John Wesley wrote of a mystical experience he had in his journal. “In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.”

The heart of the Methodist Church lies in trinitarian understanding that through the Spirit working in them, “people are moved beyond themselves into greater love.” (John Wesley, Journal of John Wesley.)

“Methodism originally arose not as a church or a new denomination, but as a holiness movement. It emerged from the transformative, mystical experience of men and women with the living God.”

(Elaine A. Heath, Ecstasy: Mysticism and Mission in Wesleyan Traditions, Perkins School of Theology, SMU, July 2007.)

“*Regretfully, the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on rational and scientific reasoning, doomed the mystical movement to the far edges of Christianity for over 400 years.*” (Jim Baker, Sacred Structures, “Does Christianity Really Have Mystical Foundations?”, [sacredstructures.org](http://sacredstructures.org)).

Twentieth Century

“ ...by the twentieth century, several well-known figures, such as Evelyn Underhill, Karl Rahner, Thomas Merton, and Henri Nouwen began to insist that mysticism was not just a special quality for the “elite” Christians found centuries ago in abbeys or convents, but rather everyone is meant to be an “everyday mystic.” (Jim Baker, Sacred Structures, “Does Christianity Really Have Mystical Foundations?”, [sacredstructures.org](http://sacredstructures.org)).

20-21<sup>st</sup> Century Mystics

Howard Thurman

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thomas Merton

Thomas Keating

Henri Nouwen

Richard Rohr

John Philip Newell

CS Lewis  
Pope John XXIII  
Dorothy Day  
Paul Tillich  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

#### IV. Examples of Practices

Labyrinth

“The labyrinth is a serpentine path used as a spiritual tool to help those who walk it grow in their relationship with God... The winding path leads toward God, towards wholeness and integration. Many people find it meaningful to remain in the center, praying and meditating. The journey out is a preparation toward offering one’s gifts to others and the world.” (Discover First Presbyterian Church, “Why Spiritual Practices or Disciplines, “<https://www.discoverfirstchurch.org/spiritual-formation/spiritual-practices.>”). Goshen Indiana

Centering prayer

“Centering Prayer is an ancient form of prayer that joined meditation on a word of scripture

with prayer. In the 1960s and 1970s, three Cistercian monks, Thomas Keating, Basil Pennington, and William Meninger, sought to revive this ancient form of meditative prayer.” (Discover First Presbyterian Church, “Why Spiritual Practices or Disciplines, “<https://www.discoverfirstchurch.org/spiritual-formation/spiritual-practices.>” ) Goshen, Indiana.

Centering prayer recognizes that thoughts will come during the sit and encourages the one praying to allow them to pass by saying a sacred word that the person has chosen earlier. In this way, the one praying continues to reside in the heart of God. Father Keating said that each thought is an opportunity to return to God,

Lectio Divina (Divine Spiritual Reading)

Lectio Divina is an ancient practice. Its roots can be traced to Origen in the third century Common Era. Benedict of Nursia introduced it as a monastic practice in the sixth century, and the Carthusian monk Guigo II formulated it as a four-step process in the twelfth century.

Lectio Divina is the prayerful reflection of biblical texts. It is not scholarly research or critical analysis of a text. Rather, Lectio Divina seeks both to open us to hear what God may be saying to us through the passage and then to discern what God may be calling us to do. Some suggest allowing twenty to thirty minutes for the practice. You may want to light a candle and say a prayer inviting God to be with you before you begin.

The prayer has four steps. Each step is the reading of a passage of scripture, which is done aloud and followed by a short period of silence (perhaps five minutes).



### 1. Lectio (Reading)

This is a slow, attentive reading of the passage while also listening for a word or phrase that stands out to you. Repeat the word or phrase as you sit in silence.

### 2. Meditatio (Reflect)

As the passage is read again, the person pays attention to any emotions the passage may generate and invites the Spirit to reveal what God may be saying to them through the word or phrase. Wait upon God as you sit in silence.

### 3. Oratio (Respond)

After the passage is read the third time, note your response to what has been revealed and ask what God may be calling you to do. You may want to journal your response or speak it aloud to God as you sit.

### 4. Contemplatio (Rest)

After the last reading comes a time of sitting quietly, giving thanks for the gift you have received, and inviting God's Spirit to come and be with you. If your mind begins to wander, encourage it to rest in God.

## Visio Divina

Gazing, Reflecting, Responding, Resting.

“Visio Divina, sacred seeing, is an ancient form of prayer that continues to be a powerful method of meditation. Art becomes the sacrament that opens our hearts to the indwelling Spirit of God. The visible makes the invisible present in a palpable way.

“Any piece of art can be the subject of reflection. It is not necessary for it to be religious art; however, reflecting on icons has been practiced since ancient times. The steps of Visio Divina are similar to those of Lectio Divina . . . .”

Begin by picking a comfortable place to sit and a piece of art to reflect on. Close your eyes and breathe in and out for a few minutes.

## Steps

1. “Gaze at the entire picture. Notice the shapes, the colors, and the lighting. Notice the detail of both the foreground and background. Once you have visually canvassed the artwork, note what has drawn your attention. As in Lectio Divina, it is God that is

luring you to a treasure meant just for you.

2. “Meditate on the part of the picture that has drawn your attention. How is God speaking to you? Why do you think God drew your attention to this particular part? Is a message conveyed that pertains to your life today? Do you sense an invitation? Do you hear a call? Is a memory aroused? Allow these thoughts to descend to your heart. What emotion is evoked? What word describes your inner stirring as you embrace this feeling? Allow God’s communication to touch you deep within where the Spirit dwells.

3. “God has been speaking to you as you meditated on this artwork. It’s now time for you to respond to the divine. Allow your words to be born in the recesses of your soul. What is your response? What is your prayer? Articulate any yearnings or desires that arise. Give voice to the emotion that is whirling within. “ Is God calling you to take a particular action through your interaction with the picture?

4. “Words are never sufficient to express our deepest selves. Turn to silence to simply rest in communion with our Creator . . . the One who loves you beyond measure. Savor the stillness. Be soothed by Love. Visio Divina sets our interior stage for a soulful connection with our Maker where intimate communion is possible.”

(Kathy Keary, Precious Blood Renewal Center, *Contemplative Prayer: The five Steps of Visio Divina*).

#### Daily Examen

“In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the Jesuits, developed an approach to assist every Christian in the discipline of self-assessment. Ignatius himself was known for practicing this examination three times each day. In the morning, he reflected on the previous night’s events; at noon, he considered the events of the morning, and at night the events of the afternoon. Each examination was about 15 minutes in length and covered five topics successively ... acknowledging, asking, admitting, repenting, and resolving. “

(Discover First Presbyterian Church, “Why Spiritual Practices or Disciplines, “ <https://www.discoverfirstchurch.org/spiritual-formation/spiritual-practices.”>). Goshen, Indiana

#### Advent Garden

#### Guided Meditation

1. Start by going outside and finding something that reveals God in the ordinary for you.
2. Julian of Norwich
  - A. Born in 1342.
  - B. Lived to a ripe old age.
  - C. A hermit with profound theological insight and wondrous visions.
  - D. She meditated on her visions for 20 years before writing them down.
  - E. From her meditations on an ordinary hazelnut, she perceived that God made it.

God loved it.

God kept it.

3. Prayer

A. Holding the object you found in your hand, say to yourself,  
“God made me. God loves me. God keeps me.”

B. If your mind begins to stray, say to yourself,  
“God made me, God loves me, God keeps me.”

C. There will be 15 minutes of silence.

4. Reflections

A. What feelings surfaced for you?

**B. How does this prayer reveal God’s creation, love, and care for each of us and all God’s people?**

5. Closing

A. Stand in a circle and say to the person on your right,  
\_\_\_\_\_, may you believe that God made, loves, and keeps  
you.

## Christian Mindfulness

### 1. Definition

“Christian Mindfulness is the practice of paying prayerful attention in the present moment to God’s abundant life.” (Amy G. Oden, *Right Here, Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness*, p. 2).

Paying attention is an invitation to awareness, to waking up to the present moment.

“Prayerful” means being ourselves, unedited and unguarded,” being “available and openhearted.”

### 2. Christian Mindfulness is biblical

“Jesus invites us into awareness” (p. 5) to waking up and staying awake.

“Staying wake is a central theme in Jesus’ teaching as a metaphor for being spiritually awake to God and God’s present kingdom.” (p. 6).

Jesus makes this call to us because God is found in the present moment, not the past or the present, but in the here and now.

a. Mt. 25:1-13

b. Mt 24:43-44

c. Mt. 26:40

d. Luke 10:38-42

“Asleep means unaware, inattentive, or unmindful. (p.6).

3. Paul also calls people to mindfulness and to pray continually

a. in order for people "...to live a God-accompanied life." (p. 9)

b. praying continually is "...rejoicing, giving thanks, holding fast to what is good, helping the weak, and being at peace with one another." (p. 9)

4. Both Jesus and God meet people in every moment, wherever they are, of their lives.

5. Christian Mindfulness holds fast to the beliefs that

a. "...God is here now, in all things at all times, even when we aren't paying attention." (p.12).

b. "... humans are bodies, souls, and minds all bound up in one whole together .... (and) ...blessed by God" (p.12-13).

c. "We (can) become captive to our own particular life stories, our wounds, and brokenness....Therefore, we need practices and patterns of life that free us for God." (P.13).

6. Marks of Christian Mindfulness

a. Free from reactivity

b. Free for recognizing God in our lives

c. Free to live authentically, to set aside the masks we wear

d. Free to be centered, rooted

e. Free to be grateful, free "...to become grateful for the flourishing of God's life here, now, in front of us." (p.21)

f. Free to turn away from judging others and to open our hearts to them.

"We can act rather than react with greater purpose toward justice, mercy, and healing in Jesus' name." (p.22).

g. Free to be "...transformed in each moment." (p 23).

7. Basic Christian Mindfulness Practice

a. Attentive Breathing ~ 30 seconds

Breathe slowly and deeply. Notice your breathing – the rise and fall of your chest. The feel of the air entering your nose and being inhaled and exhaled into your lungs. Breath comes automatically. You can **choose** to breathe purposely and attentively.

b. Attentive embodiment ~ 30 seconds

Continue breathing mindfully. As you breathe attentively, notice what arises for you in your body, your thoughts, sensations, feelings. Avoid trying to fix, justify or analyze what occurs. Only notice it.

c. Acknowledgement ~ 30 seconds

“Acknowledge whatever arises from your mindful breathing and embodiment.” (p.51)  
As you notice whatever thoughts or feelings arise let them float on by. “This step of mindfulness is an invitation to step out of the cycle of reactivity that often drives thoughts and behaviors. We pay prayerful attention to what is with an open heart to discover what God is up to....As you hold all that arises before God, let God hold it with you.” (P.51).

d. Discovery ~ 30 seconds

“As you acknowledge whatever arises, holding it within God’s presence, see what you discover. Do thoughts or feelings shift shapes? Increase or decrease? Does a sensation move elsewhere in your body? Does a thought or an attitude disappear altogether like a boat floating away?.... **Simple noticing is the main work of mindfulness.**” (p.52).  
**Closing Prayer**

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