

# Summer

## just breathing

### AIM

To explore the themes of breathing and relaxation in prayer.

### INTRODUCTION

So much in our lives is noisy and busy – our bodies are busy, our minds are busy, our environment is noisy AND busy – this is normal life these days. Much of what we do is measured, targeted, and evaluated for efficiency and productivity. This again is normal in our lives. So it's important to give ourselves time to remember there is a different way too. Our relationships – including our relationship with God – are an area where this 'different way' is important. For instance, prayer doesn't have to be about achieving anything. It needn't be 'just another thing to be done', and it certainly can't be evaluated for productivity! However, that doesn't mean it isn't valuable. Spending time with God, who loves us more than we can ever imagine, does something immeasurable and yet real and beneficial within us. But switching between busyness and stillness can be a challenge. Below are some prayer activities; a prayer and two meditations, which may help you with this transition. Remember to take your time, letting go of your natural desire to achieve something tangible. As the saying goes, "Be a human BEing for a while instead of a human DOing!"

### BREATHING PRAYER

*This is a traditional meditation intended for personal, private prayer. It's helpful to say it in time with your breathing. Take your time and repeat it as many times as feels appropriate.*

*It can also be turned into an intercessory prayer by substituting the word 'my' with 'his', 'her', 'their' 'our' etc. It can be very useful when you want to pray about a situation or person and don't know what to say.*

Lord, fill my mind with your light ...

Lord, fill my heart with your understanding ...

Lord, fill my life with your love.

Amen

### PONDERING PRAYER

*This meditation explores the challenges of incorporating silence and stillness into our prayer times. The ending can be a good way into silence, knowing we are in God's loving presence. You may like to use a visual aid of something alluded to in the meditation (such as a picture of a poppy or a deck chair) or some inspiring (but not intrusive) music during the quiet time at the end.*

I've been reading about prayer and two things are bothering me:-

Silence,

And Stillness.

# Summer

## just breathing

These words, Lord - they make me feel inadequate.  
I imagine holy hermits in hovels,  
Or serene and silent saints.

Other words and ideas pop into my head like ...  
Sore knees,  
Patience – or rather impatience!  
Boredom,  
Waste of time –  
I could go on.

Basically, Lord, I don't think I'm up to it.  
This silence and stillness stuff is just probably not for me.  
I don't have the time,  
I might fall asleep,  
And I'll end up feeling guilty and a failure – yet again.

But your word says 'Be still and know that I am God'  
How, Lord, how?  
And if I'm not still, will I not know that you are God? (pause)

One translation I read says,  
'Relax, and know that I am God'  
Actually, that sounds a bit more do-able.  
'Relax, and know that I am God'  
Yes, I reckon I could try that.

And if I fall asleep,  
Perhaps that's OK,  
It's biblical anyway –  
Jesus calls us to come to Him for rest – doesn't He?

And if I get distracted,  
Perhaps I can offer those thoughts to God too –  
There's a Psalm that says,  
'He knows my thoughts from afar and my words before I speak them'

# Summer

## just breathing

So I expect he's not so easily shocked as I think.

(pause)

Perhaps that's a good point.

Perhaps it's me that thinks I've got to try hard,  
And get the praying and being still thing right –  
As if there's just one proper way of doing it,  
When all the time, all God wants –  
Is for me to relax with Him! (pause)

There are so many ways of relaxing,  
I'm sure I'll find some that work for me and God

I realise now that prayer is a two-way thing:

First there's a command –  
'Be still / Relax' – whatever,  
Followed by a promise –  
'Know that I am God'

So I expect Him to reveal Himself when I relax.  
Oh, I don't expect startling visions or anything –  
- at least - not straight away (!)  
But now I will expect to know God's presence,  
I will expect some ... something or other,  
So I know God is meeting with me  
As I take time to meet with Him. (pause)

It sounds quite exciting, really!  
Perhaps I'll try it now –  
Deep breath out. (blow)  
Sit relaxed and comfortable.  
Think about God's ... .. Godness.  
Erm ...

He knows everything about me,  
And yet He loves me –  
Only God could do that!

# Summer

## just breathing

What else?

He's bigger than the universe,

But knows how many seeds are in a poppy head!

WOW!

I think I'll shut up now ...

And relax ...

And know ...

My God.

(silence)

### RELAX

*This meditation was written when I was emotionally, physically and spiritually tired. It is intended for individual use but may be appropriate for reading in a small group or to a friend you are supporting. It's important to **read it very slowly indeed**, pausing between lines. Allow silence at the end – for as long as is helpful to the one(s) who are tired. It may also be read as you lie down to sleep.*

O Lord I'm tired

I've run out of words

Hold me close

As I close my eyes

I relax in you

I see your smile

I am your child

Hold me close

I drift away

I hear your voice

You call my name

And I'm held close

# Summer

## just breathing

### EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

### THE NEXT STEP

If you want more seasonal materials please revisit the website.

### Acknowledgements

This material has been produced by Ruth Sermon to whom copyright belongs and who has given permission for it to be used in the Vision4life process.

### HOW TO FEEDBACK TO VISION4LIFE?

If you wish to offer any feedback – brickbats and bouquets are equally welcome! – you can do so in various ways.

You can email the Vision4Life steering group about general or website V4L issues via the website or at [admin@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:admin@vision4life.org.uk)

If you have comments and particularly contributions to the prayer year, you can email the V4L prayer year coordinator via [prayer@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:prayer@vision4life.org.uk)

If you want to make contributions or ask questions about other V4L years you can email:

Year 3 – Transformed for Evangelism: [evangelism@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:evangelism@vision4life.org.uk)