

Prayer Exercise - being wholly present

Take more time for each of these exercises than you think necessary or productive. You can pray them separately or in an unhurried sequence. As always suspend all measures of whether what you are doing is 'working'.

Present to myself

Choose a place and posture – comfortable but alert.

Become aware of your breathing, perhaps deepen it a little but let it find its own rhythm.

Pay attention to the air entering your lungs and into your depths, and the response of your body – breathing in and out.

When you are ready take time to notice your own body.

Start with toes. Flex them. Pay attention to them. Pause. Listen to them.

Repeat this with each part of your body.

As you 'meet' each part of yourself silently accept, bless, thank and commit to God.

Finally, notice your whole embodied self – accepting, blessing committing – and quietly attentively listening

If thoughts, stories or associations come to mind, note them but stay with the exercise. You can return to these another time.

Present to my surroundings.

Slowly look round the room.

Take time to notice what/who is there.

Most will be very ordinary.

Let them be so.

But take time over each object, item, feature.

Don't try to force anything meaningful out of it or get into 'conversation' with what you are observing.

Accept it as it is.

Stay attentive for longer than is your inclination

The third exercise is the one we usually try and do first

But we are often simply not ready. God was here before us actually. Waiting to welcome us.

Present to God

Present to yourself, present to your surroundings – now quietly offer all this as an open offering back to God. This is something God gives. We cannot force or manufacture it.

As you breath in, take in a word or name that expresses faith, prayer or God.

Perhaps a word or phrase that has been used today that has resonated with you.

Just take in the word. Don't get into inner discussion – just take the word/phrase in on the rhythm of your breathing.

If a name or situation comes to mind quietly notice it but return to the prayer word.

Closing

Present to yourself. Present to your world ...

Now let yourself hear God saying to you - 'Here I AM'.

Let that affirmation sink in. Repeat it in your depths.

And make your response:

'Here I am'.

Amen. It is so.