



Prison
Contemplative
Fellowship

Prayer as Relationship

What is Prayer?

Prayer is a relationship with God.

We may think of prayer as thoughts or feelings expressed in words (i.e., vocal, reflective or spontaneous).

These are not the only expressions of prayer.

In the Aramaic language, the word for prayer means **“to open oneself”** and **“to listen to the Divine Presence”**.

Prayer in that context was not necessarily saying words, but rather is closer to what we call contemplation.

What is Contemplative Prayer?

A pure gift of God.

An opening of our minds and hearts to God beyond thoughts, words, and emotions.

Simply resting in the presence of God.

Rooted in the word of God in Scripture.

Its source is the Indwelling Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God takes the initiative in relationship to us. Our desire for God is also God’s gift to us.

“We love God because God first loved us.”

(1 John 4:19)

The Christian Contemplative Tradition was summed up by Gregory the Great at the end of the 6th century as:

“The knowledge of God impregnated with love”

“Fruit of reflecting on the word of God in Scripture”

“Precious gift of God”

“Resting in God”

For the first sixteen hundred years, **contemplation** was the goal of all Christian Prayer.

What is Centering Prayer?

A method designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer
Based on the wisdom saying of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

“...when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

(Matthew 6:6)