

The Jesus Meditation

For use in times of anxiety and stress

Preparation

Set aside 20 minutes each morning. The earlier and quieter the better. Choose a corner where you will be least disturbed. Sit upright, in a chair or on a cushion/mat. Keep your back straight. Wear loose clothing. Close your eyes and place your hands on your lap with the palms open and facing upwards.

A pre-meditation collect¹

Compassionate God, who in Jesus, became our guest, help us amid the uncertainties and anxieties of our troubled world, to be alert to Your healing presence and attentive to Your reassuring voice, that we may also come to acknowledge You as our generous Host, through the kindness of the Holy Spirit, now and always, **AMEN**

Be still

Step 1

Relax.

One or both these methods may help you to relax.

- a) Listen intently to sounds near and far. Try to identify them.
- b) Pay attention to your body. How has it adjusted to the chair/ground? Do you sense any discomfort, dull pain etc.? Feel the touch of your clothing on your body.

Note; this step attempts to discipline the 'Monkey Mind' (MM) that jumps around from thought to thought, and disturbs our meditation. When the MM persists, as it will, we are to dust off these intruders like we would an annoying fly, and come back

¹ Modified from a collect in the NCCSL Lectionary

to where we were. This will not be easy, but it comes with practice.

Step 2

As you relax, **pay attention to the in-out movement of your breath**. Breathe in and out through your nose. You could try to picture the movement of your breath. Do not strain, or force your breath to move. Let it happen; just pay attention. Feel the sensation of breathing. Remain relaxed.

As you inhale, move your breath to the rest of your body. Begin with the crown of your head and move down to your throat, chest, stomach, legs and hands till you reach the tips of your fingers and toes. Hold your breath here for 2 or 3 seconds and slowly release your stress and anxiety, in the same order. Do this for 3-4 minutes.

Step 3

When you have developed an easy rhythm, keep observing the movement of your breath, and introduce these stanzas; **‘Jesus son of the living God,’** as you inhale; **‘Have mercy on me your sister /brother,’** as you exhale. Relax, as you breathe the stanzas in and out into your whole body. Do not force the words or thoughts.

As this happens you begin to consciously and naturally receive Jesus into your body, mind and inner person. Go on like this till you feel more connected with Jesus, than when you began.

Note; our relationship with Jesus is organic. He is the Wine and we are the branches; life and energy flow from Him to us. Paul repeatedly talks about us being ‘In Christ.’ This is more than memory or feeling. Our lives are grafted in Christ.

Step 4

Phase out your meditation by slowly breathing in and out seven times (seven is the Biblical numerical for wholeness, wholesomeness, completeness). As you breathe in, say '**Jesus stands among us,**' dragging the words through your inhalation. As you breathe out, take longer to release your breath, saying '**Let go. Be not afraid.**' Hold for two to three seconds before the next inhalation.

Slowly open your eyes, stretch, and go about your days' work.

End Notes;

1. It is very important that you relax through the meditation. Do not push or force yourself or try to get it right at once. Learning to meditate takes time and comes in phases. But it is only as you learn to relax, that meditation begins to work.
2. If you initially find it difficult to follow these steps, ask someone to take you through it. Two or three sessions will be sufficient for you to catch the flow.
3. Your attitude and inner thoughts however, are more important than the steps. There will come a time as the meditation grows in on you, that the steps will cease to matter.
4. Once you catch the rhythm of the sitting meditation, you may try it while lying down (on your back) as well. Those moments before you fall asleep at night and as you awake in the morning, may be most appropriate. Follow the same order.
5. If you feel unduly anxious during the day, sit or lie down quietly and practice this meditation. It will draw you to Jesus and calm you down.

6. This meditation is written for individuals, families or small groups. When done by more than one person, some advanced planning on logistics and process, will be necessary.
7. This meditation is adapted from the ancient 'Jesus Meditation' practiced and passed on as a lasting gift, to the whole Body of Christ, by the Monks of the Russian Orthodox Church.

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