

Breath Prayer Instructions

Breath prayer is the simplest of prayers. It can be used anywhere, any time.

It's called breath prayer because the words match the rhythm of your breathing and reminds you that God is with you, as near as your breath.

It can be based on a scripture, song lyric, or heartfelt need. You may want to develop a couple breath prayers: One for helping you center in silence. Others to use in everyday life.

Breath timing: Breathe slowly, inhaling to the count of 4 and exhaling to the count of 5 or 6. Try to breathe deeply from your diaphragm. * Do not hold your breath at any time but rhythmically inhale and exhale.

Choosing your words: You might try a silence-based, need-based or a scripture-based breath prayer.

Silence Based. Chose a word or very short phrase that helps you center your thoughts back on God's presence when you are practicing silence.

Examples: (*inhalation*) Lord (*exhalation*) You are here.

OR (*inhalation*) I'm Yours (*exhalation*) You're mine.

Need Based. What name do you most naturally use for God when you pray? Maybe it's Jesus, Lord, or Abba. You'll use this word during inhalation. Now take a minute of silence and imagine Jesus asks you as he did the blind man in Mk. 10:51 "What do you want me to do for you?" How do you answer? Peace, His presence, help forgiving? Use this as you exhale.

Examples: (*inhalation*) Jesus; (*exhalation*) be with me.

OR (*inhalation*) Jesus; (*exhalation*) give me your peace.

Scripture Based. Think of a favorite scripture. Maybe something Jesus said or a psalm that speaks to you. Try to summarize it into 4-8 simple syllables. Now break it up into a rhythm that fits your breathing - inhalation and exhalation.

Example using Psalm 16:9 "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."
(*inhalation*) Lord; (*exhalation*) direct my steps.

For a longer scripture like Duet. 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes before you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

Try using 2 full breathes:

(*1st inhalation*) I am strong; (*exhalation*) and courageous

(*2nd inhalation*) for You Lord; (*exhalation*) go before me

* If you aren't sure if you are breathing from your diaphragm, try taking a couple deep breaths while placing your hand on your chest. Try to keep the chest fairly still and instead, fill the belly with air so that it rises and falls instead of your upper chest.