

Christian Meditation- Tip Sheet

Simply put, Christian meditation is a form of prayer. However, it is not thinking about or talking to God, rather, it is being silent and receptive to the Spirit of Christ who dwells in our hearts.

It is an ancient form of Christian prayer, dating back to the 3rd and 4th century desert fathers and mothers.

In meditation we move from the busyness of our minds to the silence of our hearts, and the way we do this is by repeating a prayer word. The word that is recommended is “ma-ra-na-tha” – which means “Come, Lord” in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke and is found in 1 Cor. 16:22 and Rev. 22:20.

The repetition of the prayer word gives the mind something to focus on amidst all its distractions, and thus moves us from the head to the heart. As St. Paul states, “the love of God has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” Romans 5:5.

CM is a prayer of silence, stillness, and simplicity. It does not replace other forms of prayer, but in fact may enhance and deepen them.

CM is not mindfulness, although it may result in some of the benefits of mindfulness, such as less anxiety etc. CM is known as “the prayer of the heart” – and it is our faith in the Lord Jesus and trust that “the Spirit prays within us” that makes it Christian. Over time we see the fruits of the Spirit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control (Gal. 5:22). The real measure of our prayer is how we become more loving - of God, of ourselves, of others.

This form of contemplative prayer was taught by Fr. John Main, a Benedictine monk who came to Montreal in 1977 and taught meditation to clergy and laypeople for 5 years until his death in 1982. The teaching of CM continues with his successor, Fr. Laurence Freeman, who leads the World Community for Christian Meditation. “Silence creates community” is a truth that has been born out over the years. Many Christians meditate weekly in small groups all over the world, including here in the GTA.

“Silence, stillness, simplicity” are three words that sum up the practice, which can be done by people of all ages, including children.

“Be still and know that I am God” Ps. 46:10

“For God alone my soul in silence waits Ps. 62:5

“In returning and rest you shall be saved / in quietness and confidence is your strength”

Is. 30:15

“We do not even know how to pray, but the Spirit himself is pleading for us” Romans 8:26

“Set your mind on God’s Kingdom, and all the rest will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

“Be alert, be wakeful” Mark 13:33



Christian Meditation Prayer Session Format

Welcome everyone! If you are trying this for the first time on your own, start with 10 minutes and work your way up. I usually find in the morning after waking up with a cup of coffee is a good time...

If leading a group: Ask that cellphones be on silence or if on zoom mute microphones. Explain that this is a way of silent prayer, or the prayer of the heart, and has been part of the Christian spiritual tradition. This way of prayer moves us from the busyness of the mind to the silence of our hearts, where the Spirit of Christ dwells. Our prayer word takes us gently into that silence because it gives our minds something to focus on.

How to Meditate

Sit as still and as upright as is comfortable. Feet flat on the floor, hands on your lap. Sit relaxed but alert.

Close your eyes lightly.

Silently, interiorly, begin to say a single word.

Try the prayer-phrase "Ma-ra-na-tha" which means "Come, Lord."

Listen to it as you slowly and gently repeat it from the beginning to the end.

When distractions come, either with thoughts or with outside noises etc. just return to saying your word.

A bell/chime/timer will signal the beginning and the end of the meditation period.

Don't judge your meditation period, give thanks for time spent with God in faith, hope, and love.

Short Talk (I can provide these or show you where to find them)

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the silent presence of the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call. Ma-ra-na-tha. Come, Lord Jesus.

Chimes/Timer: play at beginning and end of the meditation period.

Meditate for 15 – 20 minutes

Closing Prayer (short) I get all of us to say this together

May the grace we have received sink deep in our hearts, bear fruit in our lives, and keep us in praise and thanksgiving, to the glory of your holy name. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



Resources

[canadian christian meditation community](#)(see the “Bookstore” tab at the top if you're interested in seeing some books and resources)

Wccm.org – the International centre - lots of resources, especially as the pandemic required a turn to an online format

YouTube video: [How to do Christian Meditation](#) - a short animated feature that touches on all the basic points.

Feel free to contact me if (Jmeakin31@gmail.com)*if you have any questions or you would like to join a group or begin a group or begin your own daily practice...and remember, 'the first 20 years are the hardest'

