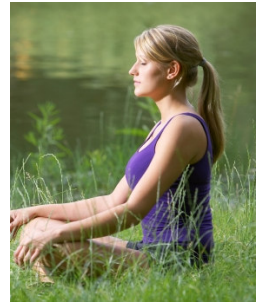




moms monthly

support encourage share grow

meditation



What experience do you have with meditation?

How would you define "Christian meditation"?

What challenges exist when trying to incorporate meditation into your daily life?

What benefits might you reap through meditation as a family discipline?

Practical Matters

Though meditation is primarily a spiritual discipline, it is accomplished in cooperation with the physical self (Psalm 84:2). In order to engage in meaningful meditation one must consider several elements of the practice that involve the body.

Breathing is rhythmic and from the torso (abdomen expands and contracts). Each breath is fully inhaled and exhaled through the nose.

A **mantra** (Sanskrit meaning "to cross the mind") is a sacred word or phrase, divided by syllables or words to coincide with each complete breath. Common mantras are *maranatha*

(Aramaic meaning "Come, Lord Jesus") or a short phrase from scripture like "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

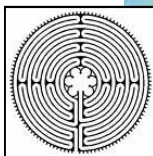


Sitting Meditation

uses a straight-backed chair (feet flat on the floor) or a cross-legged position to ensure that the head, neck and spine are in a straight line. Hands rest on the knees or comfortably in the lap. Discomfort or tension should be avoided.

Walking Meditation

involves intentional and rhythmic steps along a path. Many use a labyrinth or a quiet place in nature to assist them in this technique.



Journaling Meditation

uses a mantra as a writing prompt and physically rewrites the phrase in order to create a flow for the prayer. As distractions occur they are written down, without analysis, with a swift return to the prompt.

Distractions are minimized by disciplining the mind to return to the mantra and controlling the body through steady breathing. A consistent location and time will also assist in dealing with distractions. St. Teresa of Avila reminds us that "distractions, the wandering mind, are part of the human condition" and so one should not be discouraged by their presence.

Pondering and Wandering: Two Types of Christian Meditation

Meditation is designed to strengthen and enrich the experience of God in one's life. Both types are intentional in their focus and concentration (2 Corinthians 10:5b). The full spiritual and physical benefits of meditation will only be experienced when consistently practiced and cultivated.

Pondering involves intentionally thinking about something and is, in a sense, a more active type of meditation. It is synonymous with thinking and reflecting on a specific verse or an attribute of God. It allows an individual to penetrate into the depths of its meaning and to understand all the implications of its truth. This deep thinking provides opportunities for insight and enlightenment.

Wandering emphasizes the surrender of oneself to silence in order to fully experience the presence of God. It permits the Spirit to do its work in the soul. It intentionally defers the focus from any specific meaning or distraction and embraces the quiet of the heart. It allows God's Spirit to "wander" in the depths of each being and to bring inner strength and peace.

Be still, and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10



Coffee Talk

1. How have you simplified your mindset in the last month?
2. What have you done to simplify your surroundings?
3. What practical aspects of the simple life are you embracing as a family?

All the troubles of life come upon us because we refuse to sit quietly for a while each day in our rooms.

Blaise Pascal



mommy moment: Listen to the song *Remember Surrender* by Sara Groves and reflect on the importance of resting in God's love. Remember that in meditation the mantra allows us to surrender our whole being to God's presence. Enter into this surrender and find peace.

This Month With Ourselves:

EVALUATE:

EDUCATE:

Read Psalm 77:12, Psalm 143:5 and Psalm 48:9. Why do you think it is important to meditate on God's works, deeds and love? Psalm 119 reminds us to include God's precepts, ways, wonders, and decrees in our meditation. What significance do these reminders have in our daily lives?

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Joshua 1:8

Why do you think the church in general has failed to teach the practice of meditation as a spiritual discipline? Explore the differences between Biblical meditation and more popular forms like Yoga.

EXPRESS:

Sometimes the fear of what may be revealed keeps people from embracing silence. Journal about some of your fears and ask the Holy Spirit to drive them out.

God will make His presence and love known to you (1John 4:18). Persevere in meditation in order to find that freedom in the depths of your soul.

EXPAND:

Come to the Quiet explores the complex traditions, practices and significance of meditation as a Christian discipline. It also touches on the traditions of the Far East and offers thought-provoking insight.



family fun: Try sitting, walking, or journaling meditation as a family activity. Discuss your plan ahead of time considering reasonable goals as far as your children's ages and comfort levels. Try a silent nature walk or a brief moment of deep breathing or journaling in your bedtime routine. Alter your approach to suit your family.

This Month With Our Kids:



MAKE A POINT:

Take a moment in your day to benefit from deep breathing techniques. An easy time might be before grace at each meal: a few deep breaths in unison before the official prayer. Add a mantra to this practice as you are comfortable.

MAKE A PROMISE:

Whenever your children begin to worry or get stuck in their thinking remind them of Philippians 4:8 and help them to re-

train their minds. When they think about excellent and praiseworthy things it will put a positive spin on a situation or feeling they are facing.

MAKE A PLAN:

Let music be a meditative guide for your children. A scripture verse and a catchy tune make for easy memorization (Psalm 119:11). Let them embrace the song in their heads so that it will seep into their hearts.



Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Philippians 4:8

If we really want to pray we must first learn to listen, for in the silence of the heart God speaks.
T.S. Eliot

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION:

- Knowledge of God's love
- Experience of God's presence
- Alleviation of stress and anxiety
- Surrender of emotional baggage
- Sense of sacred connection
- Sense of peace and comfort
- Inner silence and rest
- Improved sleep
- Reduced aggression
- Increased concentration and focus
- Creative inspiration
- Renewed energy



God is a friend of silence. See how nature, trees, flowers, grass, grow in silence. The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life.

Mother Teresa