



The World Community for Christian Meditation

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[Home](#) > [Addiction](#) > [11th Step](#) > [11th Step Weekly Teachings](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#)

What is Prayer?

A very old definition of prayer described it as 'the raising of the heart and mind to God.'
What is the 'mind'? What is the 'heart'?

The mind is what thinks - it questions, plans, worries, fantasizes. The heart is what knows - it loves. The mind is the organ of knowledge, the heart the organ of love.

Mental consciousness must eventually give way and open up to the fuller way of knowing which is heart consciousness. Love is complete knowledge. Most of our training in prayer, however, is limited to the mind. We were taught as children to say our prayers, to ask God for what we or others need. But this is only half of the mystery of prayer.

The other half is the prayer of the heart where we are not thinking of God or talking to him or asking for anything. We are simply being with God who is in us in the Holy Spirit whom Jesus has given us.

The Holy Spirit is the love, the relationship of love that flows between Father and Son. It is this Spirit Jesus has breathed into every human heart. Meditation then, is the prayer of the heart uniting us with the human consciousness of Jesus in the Spirit.

'We do not even know how to pray but the Spirit himself prays within us.' (Romans 8:26)

For mental prayer-praying in words or using thoughts about God - we can make rules. There are many 'methods of mental prayer', but for the prayer of the heart there is no technique, no rules. 'Where the Spirit is, there is liberty' (2 Corinthians 3:17)

Contemplative prayer is not the privilege of monks and nuns or special mystical types. It is a dimension of prayer to which we are called.

It is not about extraordinary experiences or altered states of consciousness. It is what Thomas Aquinas called 'the simple enjoyment of the truth.'

William Blake spoke of the need to 'cleanse the doors of perception' so that we can see everything as it truly is: infinite.

This is call about the contemplative consciousness as lived in ordinary life. Meditation leads us to this and it is part of the whole mystery of prayer in the life of any person who is seeking

fullness of being.

Christian Meditation
"Your Daily Practice?"
Fr. Laurence Freeman, OSB

We invite you to reflect on the reading from "Your Daily Practice" and how it may resonate with the spiritual principles of the 12 steps of recovery; in particular the 11th Step "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out."

PRAYER - Step 11, 12x12 p 102

Now what of prayer?? Prayer is the raising of the heart and mind to God and in this sense it includes meditation. How can we go about it? And how does it fit in with meditation? Prayer is commonly understood as a petition to God.

MEDITATION - Step 11, 12x12 p 101

Meditation is something which can always be further developed. It has no boundaries, either of width or height. Aided by such instruction and example as we can find, it is essentially an individual adventure, something which each one of us works out in his own way. But its object is always the same; to improve our conscious contact with God, with His grace, wisdom and love. And let's always remember that meditation is in reality intensely practical. One of its first fruits is emotional balance. With it we can broaden and deepen the channel between ourselves and God as we understand Him.

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11th Step Weekly Teachings

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