

Walking as a spiritual practice.

Walking as a spiritual practice helps us explore our thoughts and our own hearts, it can shape our interior orientation. There's a rootedness in it. It also offers endless discovery as we begin to see what is hidden in plain sight.

To quote Simone Weil "love is paying attention"

* If it is helpful, for each portion of the different kinds of awareness and questions, set a timer on your phone for say, 8 min, when it sounds push repeat. If needed, remain on your current question or allow it to continue your movement forward.

* Also, for some, it is helpful to have an object, like a stone, in your hand as something that returns your attention back to the present and away from rambling thoughts.

Some sections may need less time, some may ask for more. The aim is to be present to God, letting the Holy Spirit lead.

Beginning the practice...

As you walk, take some time to give everything and everyone to God. Breathe deeply. Feel the release physically as you move, allowing tension felt in muscles, shoulder, head or gut ease as you exhale. As the enjoyment of what surrounds you surfaces, express your thankfulness to God.

(roll the stone) As you walk for the next (8 min) carry with you this stone Make mental notes of what you observe. If you find yourself getting lost in thought, roll the stone in your hand to remind you to give your attention to what is around you. Take note, how would you describe your current physical response?

When ready, **Ask:** Jesus what delights You about me?

(roll the stone) As you continue, shift your focus to what you hear. If you need to pause occasionally, do so. Again if you find yourself drifting, roll the stone in your hand as a reminder to be here now. If you were to take note of your present mental/ thinking response to where you are, how would you describe it?

When ready, **Receive:** If Jesus were to give you a word or phrase or an image what would it be?

(roll the stone) Continue walking, this time be aware of what you sense. Does temperature or light and shadow create moods or heighten awareness. Are there scents that catch you? Within this time, reflect, what emotions were brought up? Does this surprise you?

When ready, **Respond:** Jesus what are you revealing to me with these emotions that arose? What are you inviting me into when I sensed ...

Walking with a partner as a spiritual practice:

Walking as a spiritual practice slows us down and helps us explore our thoughts and hearts, it can shape our interior orientation as we both share and listen. There's a rootedness in it. It also offers endless discovery as we begin to see what is hidden in plain sight.

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Walking with others vs walking by ourselves.

Alone - more attentive to me, more honest with my own emotions as well as aware of what's around me.

With Others - attentive to your companion. More depth and intimacy than sitting face to face. Know them differently / can be a time of confessions / we are more curious than dogmatic when walking.

Choose ahead of time what style suits. Do you want to alternate asking one another each question as you go or to ask all the questions of one person then the other? Or just use the questions as a beginning structure and see where it goes.

Beginning the practice:

- As you walk, take some time to give everything and everyone to God. Feel the release physically as you move, allowing tension felt in muscles, shoulder, head or gut ease as you exhale. Breathe deeply. As the enjoyment of what surrounds you surfaces, express your thankfulness to God.

As you share with one another prompt depth by asking 'tell me more about that' Why does it impact you that way?

- As you've been listening and engaging with the day; is there something within you that has been surfacing physically and/or intuitively? (Take a moment to reflect, relive and then share - for instance have I caught myself cringing or leaning forward)
- As you've been listening and engaging with the day, is there a pattern of thoughts that keeps resurfacing? (Take a moment to reflect, relive and then share - for instance am I defensive or open? Is there an issue that keeps popping up?)
- As you've been listening and engaging with the day, is there something within you that has been surfacing emotionally? (Take a moment to reflect, relive and then share - for instance - from a fire of excitement to dread)

Breath Prayer

Breath prayer is discovered more than created. We are asking God to show us His will, His way His truth for our present need. Find some uninterrupted time and a quiet place and sit in silence, being held in God's loving presence. After a few moments allow God to call you by name: Next, allow this question to surface: "What do you want/" Answer this question simply and directly. Maybe a single word will come to your conscious mind: "peace, faith, strength", perhaps it will be a phrase: " to understand your truth, to feel your love." next connect this phrase with the most comfortable way you have of speaking about God: Abba, Holy Father, Immanuel, Creator. Finally you will want to write out your breath prayer staying within what is comfortable to say in one breath. Over the next few days allow God to adjust your breath prayer ever so slightly. You may have written down, "help me understand your truth, Lord." but after a day or two of prayer you realize that what you really need is not so much to understand God's truth as to live God's truth. Hence you begin praying, "help me live your truth Lord." Sometimes we reach a point beyond this prayer where we are stilled within and without. Christ is before us; Christ is behind us; Christ surrounds us and is through us. This is a point where we let go of our labor and be with God.

Taken from Richard Foster's book, Prayer