



NURTURE YOUR MIND, BODY & SPIRIT

*The Lord said: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."
Jeremiah 20:13*

God Wants You:

For thousands of years, believers have known direction and nurturing from their Loving Creator. Both Christian prayer and meditation consist of a structured attempt to connect with the Lord for healing, love, direction, comfort, help, wisdom, etc. Without this holy input, humans are lost. Christian meditation became popular about 800 years ago and has evolved into many different methods. Labyrinth walking, Taize and Tai Chi are the Christian meditation methods taught at this church for spiritual growth.

Meditation and Prayer:

Useful meditation and prayer can begin with a structured mind of either repeating thoughts or experiencing none at all. The repeated focus can be on a scripture, like "Be still, and know that I am God," (Psalm 46:10) or a common prayer, like "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." The words selected must sincerely represent genuine feelings, since God responds to inner motives. The second method is called contemplative prayer, which refers to creating a content-free mind directed towards hearing God. This begins with a request to know the Lord and takes great practice to accomplish through the self-discipline of constantly emptying the mind. With sincerity, determination and patience, believers must faithfully persist and wait for the Lord's response, which could be immediately or take months. Like any good relationship, this communication requires hard work and self-discipline.

Labyrinth, Taize, Tai Chi:

Christian Labyrinths originated in the Middle Age European churches as a substitute pilgrimage when it became dangerous for traveling to the Holy Lands and recently became popular again with Christians. Taize services began in France during WWII for simple worship in difficult conditions, like the first Christians did with music, song, prayer and meditation. Tai Chi

evolved from martial arts into a healing method, called Sun-style by Dr. Paul Lam, and then Sue Underwood added Christian prayer to this meditation.

Stress and Relaxation:

Meditation enables a person to handle stress and reduce its consequences. The American Medical Association says stress causes about 80% of illness and about 60% of deaths, so preventing this danger with simple relaxation skills is wise. The following is an easy one that can be used in combination with prayer to be more effective and/or stress reduction for healing. Begin by focusing on the breath going in and out deeply and slowly through the nose, throat and lungs. Breathe 3 times from the abdomen, stomach and chest. With still meditation and/or prayer, a person can relax muscle groups further by starting with the toes: have the toe muscles tighten up and then relax 3 times, then make the feet muscles tighten up and relax 3 times, then repeat with the calves, thighs, etc. until every muscle group in the body has been covered and finish with the head.

Jesus Wants You:

Out of the joy from the Creator's perfect love, God created humans with unique likes, talents and personalities. Then they mostly get subjective input from the world and this becomes their belief foundation for reality unless they experience God, Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit. While physical suffering and pleasure provide the opportunity to learn, eternal spiritual growth needs holy love, peace and accountability from a personal relationship with Jesus because He is the door to the Father. Any beliefs that prevent this support and guidance are not beneficial and can be changed by replacing them with applicable, connecting scriptures through devoted prayer and meditation.

Discerning Thoughts:

Christians should notice and analyze the different qualities of their thoughts by praying for validity and practicing spiritual discernment for separating and recognizing all the different input. A guide list like below can help, but most importantly never automatically accept ownership of thoughts if they seem very different, chaotic or evil and always test the source. Christians must have Biblical knowledge for holy reference, recognize the voice of their Lord and know themselves so well that they can identify their own thoughts.

Holy input must:

- 1) Convey love, assurance, wisdom, truth, admonition, usefulness or action.
- 2) Have a spiritual purpose that will push a person forward.
- 3) Agree with his or her personality, innate talents and heart-felt instincts.
- 4) Leave a person and/or others spiritually changed for the better.

God would NEVER:

- 1) Create feelings of anxiety and fear that he or she cannot understand. (However, it might feel uncomfortable because growth can be new and unusual.)
- 2) Leave a person purposely confused about the message.
- 3) Try to force or manipulate a person or others into anything.
- 4) Have spiritually harmful results for a person from effects of any action taken.

Spiritual Growth Pointers:

- 1) Earnestly seek Lord Jesus Christ to experience perfect love and eternal salvation by accepting Him as Lord and Savior with an obvious verification of change from being spiritually born as a new loving creation. (John 3:3-8)
- 2) Read the whole Bible and pray for understanding from God's perspective to apply this information wisely.
- 3) Ask the Holy Spirit to help you align with God's Will because this is a Christian's spiritual destiny.
- 4) Connect with God in daily continuous prayers of sincere adoration, worship, praise, love, thankfulness, obedience, requests, repentance, spiritual growth and intercession, so answers and change come quickly.

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Tranquil Hearts:

Susan Wright began her Christian ministry under direction of our Loving Creator. While she has worked on discovering truth for over 30 years with education, teaching, advising and researching in the world, her tranquility advice of peace and love are from Jesus Christ. "This is my command: Love each other." John 15:17