

PRAYING THE PRESENT MOMENT
An Exercise in Contemplative Writing by Kathleen Henderson Staudt

I
Morning

On this day the Lord has acted.; we will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118::24)

Spend a few minutes sitting quietly, and recall before God the first part of the day you are remembering, from your first rising until about midday.

Ask the spirit to guide you, and imagine yourself back into one part of that morning -- your rising, breakfast, the commute, your work or someone you met. Stay with the first thing that you remember, and return to that time, in the presence of God. Sit with that memory in quiet, for a few minutes.

Write down a response to God's presence -- or perhaps your desire for God's presence, in the moment you have been recalling.

II
Midday

*Lord, you have searched me out and known me;
you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.*

*You trace my journeys and my resting-places, and are acquainted with all my ways.
(Psalm 139: 1-2)*

Moving now to the middle of your day -- let the Holy Spirit guide your memory to one piece of that day- a meeting -- a task, some work that you were given to do.

Remember this part of the day in the presence of God. You might try writing your recollection as a note to God, saying "you" to your Companion on the day's journey.

If you had a long afternoon, repeat this exercise with another part of the workday

III Evening

*Turn again to your rest, O my soul,
for the Lord has treated you well.
For you have rescued my life from death,
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.
I will walk in the presence of the Lord
in the land of the living.*
(Psalm 116: 6-8)

Now remember your home-coming: the commute, the transition from day to evening -- whatever it was for you.

Remember, in God's presence, how you spent your evening. Write down a few sentences recalling something you particularly remember about that evening -- a person, an event, a detail of the evening's routine.

IV Night

*Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,
you that stand by night in the house of the Lord.
Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord;
the Lord who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion.*
(Psalm 134)

Now remember yourself going through your late evening routine, settling down to your night's rest.

If you can, write down a prayer offering the day to God, giving thanks for any insights about the day that the Spirit has led you to in this time of reflection.

V

Returning to the Present Moment

Look over your notes now and then put your journal aside and sit still, in the presence of God, remembering that the presence you have been discerning in the day that has passed is also with you, just as steadily and firmly, in this present moment. Wherever you are in your day now, stay for a few minutes in that presence, giving thanks in whatever way you can for God's love for you in the present moment.