

the invitation

Join YWAM's global prayer

June 14, 2018 – The Invitation

Topic: *Contemplative*

Join YWAMers around the globe in praying and hearing from God. He is inviting you!



Photo credit: YWAM Berlin

In this edition of The Invitation, we invite you to consider what we can learn from the contemplative tradition of the global Church, and why contemplative practices might be a helpful balance to our busy, activity-oriented lives.

Steve Cochrane, one of YWAM's leaders, spoke of his own journey into contemplative practices. "In the past decade, I've been on a more focused pilgrimage to listen to what Spirit is saying from a diversity of those that have walked the road before in deeper devotion to Christ." As Steve says, the work of "friends from the past" teaches us to sink down into the presence of God in the midst of our active lives.

Over recent years, a significant number of us in the YWAM family have, like Steve, been

growing more familiar with contemplative practices. This is a helpful development for us, who are so used to active, outward-focused expressions of faith. Our desire “To know God and make God known” emphasizes the way we are to give attention to both our inner life of knowing God and our outward expression of making Him known. Indeed, contemplation is really about maintaining in all our activities a listening attitude toward God. This helps us live out YWAM’s shared value of hearing the voice of God, and helps us to expand that experience beyond our community meetings and prayer times.

Since around the third century the people of God have been engaging in practices that we now call Contemplative. To be contemplative is simply to develop a prayerful attentiveness to God—this attitude of listening—as we go about our busy, not-so-quiet lives. These prayerful practices help us to take note of how we’re doing on the inside and to develop an ongoing conversation with God no matter what is going on around us. In this way, our moods, our feelings of resistance or engagement, and our responses to our surroundings can all become prompts that direct us to God and enable us to listen to Him and discern His loving action in our lives.

A few of these contemplative practices involve: breath prayers, which consist of praying a short phrase with your in- and your out-breath; lectio divina, which is a meditative way of reading short passages of scripture; and silent prayer such as Centering Prayer.

As a mission, we are focused on the process of discipleship. And yet the process of transformation is still more mysterious than we’d like to admit! The truth is that it is God Himself who changes us to become Christ-like. Our part is simply to arrange our lives so that our motivating desires become more and more aligned with Him.

So these contemplative practices can benefit you, whether you are a Discipleship Training School (DTS) leader, working hard to create an environment in which your trainees can meet with God; or a worship leader, seeking to draw up living water from the well of your inner life of faith; or a community development project leader, daily facing the needs of those around you and desiring to put the Gospel of the Kingdom into practice. To do all the diverse activities we do, without running dry and instead experiencing fullness, we must cultivate a rich inner life with God by the Spirit.

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17-19

Please join with YWAM’s global prayer day, called The Invitation, during the month of June to pray with us. You are particularly invited to pray during our prayer day, June 14. If you only have a few moments to pray, ask the Lord to convict each of our students and workers to experience God in deeper ways through contemplative methods.

Prepare to Pray:

Once your group has gathered for prayer, consider playing a song such as *Christ be all Around Me* by All Sons & Daughters which you can find here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmge-yckoo>. Give people time to settle into this time with the Lord.

Introduce the theme of contemplative prayer and developing new ways of listening to God. To do this you might read aloud the scriptures below, or choose others that come to mind.

Explain that Breath Prayers are one way we can cultivate an awareness of God and a listening heart through our daily activities. Lead people through steps 1 to 3 of Explore a Contemplative Practice as outlined below. Do this by giving people time individually and in silence, prompting them gently to move from one step to the others after a few minutes with each instruction.

After completing step 3, give people time in twos or threes to share their Breath Prayer and their image. When they have done this, encourage them to continue with steps 4 and 5 in their own time. You might consider checking in with people at your next staff gathering to ask how their practice is helping them.

Explore a Contemplative Practice (Written by Tonya Stanfield.):

1. Write: What spiritual truth do you want to become a part of you? Write this truth in the form of a Breath Prayer, a simple, short phrase that can be expressed in one inhale and exhale. (Examples: "I am alive... in you, Jesus." Or, "You sustain me... with your love.")
2. Imagine: What mental picture do you want to hold in your imagination as you practice your breath prayer? You could call this image your Wordless Prayer. (Examples: The Trinity or God's loving gaze, etc.)
3. Practice: Spend a few minutes praying your Breath Prayer as you inhale and exhale while you hold your Wordless Prayer in your imagination. Do not rush. Feel the fullness of your breath. Give it your full awareness.
4. Commit: Breath Prayer is a transformative tool *if* practiced until it becomes a near-effortless, bodily rhythm. At first, the hardest part is simply to remember to do it, but you'll know it's taking root in your soul when you discover you're growing in self-awareness and God-awareness.
5. Redeem A Routine: What's one routine you perform *every day* that's in need of redeeming? Maybe you know your chosen routine right away, or maybe you want to spend a few days paying attention to your attitudes and emotions as you go about them. Consider praying your breath prayer at these times in particular. (Examples: Getting your kids ready for school. Walking into the office. Waking up to social media.)



Photo credits: YWAM Los Angeles, California USA

Let's Pray:

- Pray for YWAM to deepen our experience of listening to God:
- Acknowledge before God our tendency to get busy and distracted in ways that make it hard to listen well. Thank Him for His faithfulness in continuing to draw our hearts to Him.
- Pray for your own team, for another team that works in your area, and for YWAMers in at least one other country. Ask God to help our people to cultivate daily practices of listening to Him as part of our life in community.
- Pray that as God works with us to deepen our own experience of listening to Him, we would become those who cause others to grow in their desire for intimacy with God.
- Reflect on the busy pace of life in many parts of the world, the way people are often too busy to be aware of their own inner life and longing for peace. Ask God to be at work in the busyness and noise of our modern world, to draw people to Himself, the true source of peace.

Take Action:

- Want to discover more about the role of the contemplative in your walk of faith? Turn to Dr. Curt Thompson's book, *Anatomy of Soul*, for a more thorough explanation of how developing a contemplative rhythm helps to support spiritual vitality and psychological health.
- Consider downloading the app called Centering Prayer and use it to cultivate a regular moment of silent prayer in your day.
- Read more by Ruth Haley Barton, especially her book titled *Sacred Rhythms, : Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*.

- Check out the podcast by the Transforming Center called *Strengthening the Soul of your Leadership*.
- Develop the habit of allowing moments of reflective silence during staff gatherings or leadership meetings.
- Take a look at *Solo*, a collection of lectio divina meditations by Eugene Peterson, the writer of *The Message*. Try using these with your team.
- Consider adding one or two retreat-style days to your regular team times. Contact us for recommendations of people who could advise or facilitate your time.
- Learn more about the role of Spiritual Directors and how they could support you in your walk with God: <http://www.transformingcenter.org/2013/04/spiritual-direction-with-pastoral-and-corporate-leaders/>
- Share on facebook.com/youthwithamission, post a picture and add a comment about how you prayed.
- Go to twitter.com; search for #praywithywam and tweet about your prayer time/post a picture. You can also post a photo on Instagram and use the same hashtag, #praywithywam.
- Send an email to prayer@ywam.org letting us know how you prayed and what God revealed to you.



Photo credit: YWAM Amsterdam

How We Prayed

May 2018 – Refugees

- One person cited Isaiah 56:1-8 and asked Father God to call, draw and establish these refugees in His house and to bring them to His holy mountain.

These I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer . . .
Isaiah 56:7

- One person prayed that God’s invitation to an eternal home would be accepted and also praise God for covering refugees with His loving kindness to draw them to him.

Future Topics:

July 12, 2018 YWAM Foundational Values 7 - 9 (Be Broad-structured and Decentralized, Be International and Interdenominational, Have a Biblical Christian Worldview)

August 9, 2018 YWAM Together

September 13, 2018 Kolkata

Don’t Miss The Invitation:

- Sign up for prayer updates. Go to ywam.org, find the “Stay Connected” box on the home page, put in your email address and click “Sign Up.”
- Download prayer updates in a specific language. Go to ywam.org/theinvitation. (Currently available in Spanish, Portuguese, Indonesian, Korean or request other languages.)
- Join the conversation about how God is leading in these prayer times. Comment on the Facebook page on the second Thursday at facebook.com/youthwithamission or on Twitter [@ywam](https://twitter.com/ywam), hashtag [#praywithywam](https://twitter.com/praywithywam). You can also post a photo on Instagram and use the same hashtag, [#praywithywam](https://twitter.com/praywithywam).
- You can now listen to The Invitation as a podcast. To sign up or listen to past episodes, go to: ywampodcast.net/prayer.
- If you sense God giving you a word or a direction for YWAM’s prayer, please contact us: prayer@ywam.org.

