

BODY PRAYER

- * reminds us of our humanity
- * helps us regain our sense of freedom to express a full range of emotion
- * brings joy
- * helps us relax and rest
- * encourages wholeness
- * keeps us in touch with our physical selves
- * reduces stress



Some other ideas for Body Prayer

move with music - choose something that fits your mood eg a melody that takes you to a point of thanksgiving or a lament that helps you express your pain.

change your posture - sit, or stand, with arms stretched high or wide; lie prostrate on the floor, or curl up as a child might. Let your words, thoughts and posture harmonise.

if you're brave, look at yourself in a mirror unclothed . What do you see as you take a long, loving look at your physical reality? Gently let your hands trace the patterns of your form from top to toe - or as much as you can reach! Talk to God about any aspect of your body's wellbeing which needs attention, then take a warm shower, imagining yourself blessed by God's love .

Body Prayer



Why 'Body' Prayer?

We think nothing of using our mind as we reflect on the needs of those for whom we intercede; we may use our imagination as we pray with Scripture, entering into the reality of the Gospels.

Scripture reminds us that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit, (1 Corinthians 6: 19), How often, though, do we allow our bodies, not only to participate in our prayer, but to enrich our life with God?

In actively involving our body in our prayer, we are practising bringing the whole self before God. If we don't have the words to give shape to the complexity of how we may be feeling, expressing ourselves physically provides a safe and private emotional outlet and helps us be honest with the One who loves us and accepts us as we are.

What would it be like if, for example, as we were reading a Scripture passage which talked of struggle, we locked our hands and pulled, one against the other?

Or if we were praying about a loss and we allowed ourselves to wring our hands in grief or shake our fists in the air, enraged?

Or if we gave God substantial time to minister to us physically and emotionally, refreshing us for our life of service and helping us avoid

SPIRITUAL EXHAUSTION

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Flora Slosson Wuellner in her book "Feed my Shepherds" (Upper Room, 1998) suggests that, when we experience spiritual exhaustion and inner fatigue, we lay aside all forms of prayer and reading, even intercessory prayer, confident that God will take care of those for whom we normally pray, while we rest.

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She suggests that we use 'soaking prayer':

"Make your body comfortable and at rest

Think of God's warmth and light surrounding you, as if you lie in the sun, or a pool of refreshing water if the sun image is too hot!

You may wish to let your body slowly and gently rock from side to side as if being cradled.

Or you may just wish to lie very still and let God's light and breath flow slowly and deeply into every part of your body....your whole self is washed in God's presence.

After a few minutes of soaking prayer, lay your hands gently on your heart, abdomen, your forehead, over your eyes and pray very slowly:
The living love of Jesus Christ now fills me.....
..... calms me..... heals me.....
renews me.

Touch or think of any part of your body that is in special need and pray this prayer of Christ's indwelling presence.

Use any words that you feel are right for you."

(pages 124-5)