

Breath Prayer

by Rev. Mark Muckler

The Biblical Basis for Breath Prayer

The practice of *breath prayer* is an ancient spiritual discipline that began thousands of years ago, most likely from the recitation of the Psalms. Some scholars also believe that the first breath prayers were offered by early Christian desert dwellers of the 3rd century. Whereas other say that after years of intense persecution, Christians whom were exiled to the Egyptian desert prayed and meditated upon God's Word using breath prayers as a means of helping them to get through tough times. Nonetheless, whatever it's origin, let us go back to the beginning, in the Book of Genesis to the creation story.

In the beginning, *Ruah*, (*the Spirit of God*) hovers over the waters. (Gen 1:2). God then creates Adam by endowing him with the *nishmat hayyim* (*the Breath of Life*) (Gen 2:7), and as a result, Adam becomes a *nefesh hayya*, (*a Living Being*), (Gen 2:7).

So applicably speaking, when we think of praying what is called a *breath prayer*, we are reflecting upon the Spirit of God which has wonderfully made us, breathed into us the breath of life, and crafted us into a living being. We remember and give God thanks for the breath of God which fills our lungs, yes, but also we give God thanks for His Divine Spirit that fills our very soul and gives us life today and life everlasting for all those who believe. As Christians, we believe that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God (Rom 12:1-2).

So when praying a *breath prayer*, we pray in such a way that is as simple as breathing. Inhaling and Exhaling. Naturally. At all times. And in all places. We are reminded of Paul's charge to the Thessalonians to "*pray continually*" (1 Thess 5:17). And so we pray the breath prayer, praying that the Spirit of God would continue to fill us and transform us into new creations.



Biblical Reference:

“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” - **Genesis 1:2 NIV**

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. - **Genesis 2:7 NIV**

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own - **1 Corinthians 6:19**

“Pray continually” - **1 Thessalonians 5:17 NIV**

“Perfect love casts out fear.” - **1 John 4:18 NIV**

“Have mercy on me, a sinner.” - **Luke 18:3**

“1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” - **Romans 12:1-2 NIV**

“16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 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 3:16-19 NIV**

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.” - **Psalm 150:6 NIV**

“Be still and know that I am God.” - **Psalm 46:10**



The Practice of Breath Prayer

The breath prayer is a very short prayer of praise and petition unto God. Again, this type of prayer can be prayed as naturally as breathing, inhaling and exhaling. Where you pray this prayer, is completely up to you. You may want to pray this prayer during your quiet time in a designated space and during a designated time. Or, as the prayer implies, you may pray this prayer anywhere at anytime, praying continually.

Our purpose in prayer is always to relate with our God who longs to relate with us. As in any relationship, we talk AND we listen. However, when we pray with our God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are relating with the Lord of Lord, the King of Kings, the Prince of Peace, our Sustainer, Comforter, Healer, Provider, The One who knows our name and everything about us, and so much more. When you pray, what do you typically call God? Almighty God, Father, Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit, Shepherd, etc. When praying the breath prayer, begin by considering your favorite name for God proclaiming His goodness, mercy, and never ending love. Begin with a praise, an admonition. Psalm 150:6 says, *“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.”* As you inhale taking a full deep breath, think of your desperate need of the abiding Presence and Power of Almighty God.

And when exhaling, pray a prayer of petition. Breath out fully, and let go of all fear, worry, anxiety, and stress. 1 John 4:18 says, *“Perfect love casts out fear.”* Simply catching our breath, so to speak, welcomes the love of God to remove our worries expelling them from heart, mind, and soul. Think of the Holy Spirit taking up residency within your very being. More and more of You Jesus, and less and less of me.

As you are praying, notice your breath. Notice the sacred rhythm of inhaling and exhaling. Repeat your prayer multiple times, waiting, listening, resting, being still in the Presence of God. May your prayer be in unison, in harmony with your breathing. Literally embody the Spirit of the Living God who gives you life. Praying the breath prayer invites us to truly grasp *“how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, knowing this love that surpasses knowledge-being filled to the measure of the all the fullness of God.”* - Ephesians 3:18-19.



Examples of Breath Prayer

Inhale: Jesus Christ, Son of God
Exhale: Have mercy on me.

Inhale: Jesus, Abide in me
Exhale: As I abide in You

Inhale: More of You Jesus
Exhale: Less of me

Inhale: Lord open my heart
Exhale: And hold me, here now

Inhale: The Lord is my Shepherd
Exhale: I shall not want

Inhale: Lord open my ears
Exhale: For Your servant is listening

Inhale: Into Your hands O God
Exhale: I commit my spirit

Inhale: Jesus, Light of the world
Exhale: Be a Light within me

Inhale: Create in me a clean heart
Exhale: and renew a steadfast spirit within me

Inhale: Lord, shine Your face upon me
Exhale: and give me peace

Inhale: Your perfect love O God
Exhale: Casts out all fear

Inhale: My heart trusts in God alone
Exhale: I shall have no fear

Inhale: Help me O God
Exhale: And grant me Your Peace

Inhale: You, are my strength and my shield
Exhale: The lifter of my head

Inhale: May Your Kingdom Come
Exhale: and Thy Will Be Done

Inhale: You O Lord
Exhale: Are my Strength and my Song

Inhale: Father Forgive Me
Exhale: For I am Yours

Inhale: Spirit of the Living God
Exhale: Fall afresh on me

Inhale: Lord lead me
Exhale: And I will follow

Inhale: You are the potter
Exhale: I am the clay

Inhale: My heart and my flesh cry out
Exhale: But God is my strength forever

Inhale: O Lord soften my heart
Exhale: And mold me, here now

** You may even want to write your own breath prayer*

