BREATH PRAYERS
CONNECT US TO GOD

Breath prayers connect us to God with every intentional breath. Every breath is a holy gift.

Considering its great size and power, an elephant must exercise self-control and restraint to effectively navigate and thrive. Likewise, breath prayers help us navigate and thrive through the elephant-sized gift of our breath (and the *One who is with us in every breath*).

Without breath in our lungs, we die. What started when God breathed the *breath of life* into Adam continues in each of us every minute of every day on this spinning, blue planet. At least a dozen times a minute, we repeat this ancient rhythm that began in the Garden of Eden.

- ***The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*** (Job 33:4)
- ***And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.*** (John 20:22)
- ***This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: Look, I am about to infuse breath into you and you will live.*** (Ezekiel 37:5)

How often do we move through our days giving no thought to the extraordinary gift of breathing? Chronic illness, mental illness, and chronic pain can become fertile ground for breath prayer. When it's difficult to think or process language, when it's hard to move beyond the suffering, when it seems impossible to go on, breath prayers can become a flicker of light for our next breath.

AN ANCIENT RHYTHM

The Desert Mothers and Fathers chose breath, an ancient and automatic rhythm to learn to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Their most common breath prayer was an echo of Luke 18:13:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God ... have mercy on me, a sinner.

With every breath, their hearts and minds were drawn to Jesus.

Christ in. Self out. More of Him. Less of me.

HOW TO PRAY A BREATH PRAYER

- Close your eyes.
- Quiet your thoughts and take a deep breath.
- When you're ready, begin with the first few words of Scripture as you breathe in, ***Let the word of Christ*** – (Focus on each word.)
- Complete the verse as you exhale, – ***dwell in you richly.***
- If you are anxious or your body is restless, try adding a simple movement as you breathe:
  - Pull your hands into your chest as you breathe in.
  - Open your hands in surrender as you breathe out.
- Begin to recognize the rhythm of the words with the rhythm of your breathing in this place of quiet surrender.

BREATH PRAYERS TO TRY

The breath prayers below are adaptations of the verse in parenthesis.

My soul finds rest ... in God alone. (Psalm 62:1a)

When I am afraid, ... I will trust in you. (Psalm 56:3)

Peace. Be still. (Mark 4:39)

I cried to my God for help. ... He heard my voice. (Psalm 18:6)

You are the Potter. ... I am the clay. (Isaiah 64:8)

Speak, Lord, ... for your servant is listening. (1 Samuel 3:9b)

You are doing a new thing ... Let me perceive it! (Isaiah 43:19)

Not my will, ... but yours be done. (Luke 22:42)

Where God's love is, ... there is no fear! (1 John 4:18a)

May your unfailing love ... be my comfort. (Psalm 119:76a)

The Lord is ... my strength and song. (Psalm 118:14)

He heals the brokenhearted ... and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

Lord, shine Your face on me ... and give me peace. (Numbers 6:25-28)

Be still and know ... that I am God... (Psalm 46:10a)