

# *Living well through Advent*

*Week One*

*Friday 2 December 2022*

*Simplicity and the Breath*

*Then the Lord God formed 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*

God gave us the gift of life by giving us the gift of breath. On average, we take 16 breaths every minute, 960 breaths every hour, and 23,040 breaths every 24 hours. Any time we feel rushed, stressed, overwhelmed, or disconnected, we have hundreds of opportunities every hour to return to our calm, peaceful, grounded centre simply by paying attention to our breath. We all have been gifted with this powerful and effective built-in way to slow ourselves down, to rebalance, and to be present, to ourselves, to others, and to God.

In order to work more intentionally with the breath, today we'll explore a breath prayer practice using Psalm 46:10, the verse Scott Stoner invited us to engage with on Wednesday: Be still and know that I am God. We can use this awareness prayer practice whenever we need help recentring so that we may listen more deeply for God.

First, simply notice your breathing for a few cycles. Then begin to slow down your breathing, paying attention to any tension you may be holding in your body: the jaw, neck, shoulders, your hands. As you become aware of any tension, simply breathe into those areas while gently relaxing them. After a few slow, relaxing breaths, begin, on the inhale, to say internally: "Be Still." As you exhale, say inwardly: "And Know." Pause briefly at the bottom of your exhale and then repeat the inhale and exhale for as many cycles as you have time for, or until you feel a sense of peace and calm, a sense of inner stability and connection.

Assessing the practice outlined in today's lesson:

- ◆ Did this breath prayer practice help you to be present and open to God?
- ◆ If you felt any resistance or found yourself distracted, were you able to return to your breath, the silence, and your centre?
- ◆ If not, simply notice this without judgment, instead offering kindness, acceptance, and love to yourself.

Breath in  
*"Be still"*  
Breath out  
*"and know"*