

## **Opening to God through Body Awareness and Body Movement**

### **Opening body prayer: 4 simple gestures**

**Where are you? (God's question to Adam and Eve)**

**Here am I. (Isaiah in the temple)**

**Abide in my love (Jesus in his farewell talk to his disciples.)**

**Love one another (Jesus in the Last Supper)**

**Intent:** to become aware of and surrendered to God's Presence through body awareness, body movement.

### **Holy Scripture:**

I Cor. 6: 19 Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?

Acts 17:29 For in God we live and move and have our being.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...

I want to point out that all of us here are lovely people

But none of us here are angels.

That statement is not a judgement on anyone's moral character

Instead it is an ontological statement – a statement about our being

Angels are disembodied spirits

Whereas all of us as human beings are embodied

We are embodied, ensouled, enspirited – all 3 together

Not one without the other – but all 3 mysteriously intertwined

Just like a cake which consist of flower, sugar, and salt

When the cake is made you can't separate the flower

As human beings our bodies, souls, and spirits are mysteriously inter

**The Contemplative Tradition unabashedly celebrates the unity of our bodies, our minds, and our spirits.**

**Spiritual leaders from both the E and the West have emphasized this unity, this innerconnectedness of body, soul, and spirit. For example.**

In a recent interview with Larry K. the Dali Lamma was asked...

What should westerners do to deepen their spirituality. His response had

To do with the body.... *Don't eat so much!*

In the SE of St. Iganatius – Ig. writes: “ *I will enter upon the meditation, now kneeling, now prostrate upon the ground, now lying face upwards, now seated, now standing, always being intent on seeking what I desire.* ”

The Buddah taught that there was no higher form of practice than  
Body awareness and that enlightenment could be exp. thru it  
The Hebrew people spoke of dancing as praying with the bones  
And the Psalmist celebrates our embodiment with these wds  
*I will thank you O Holy One – because I am wonderfully made  
Your works are wonderful, and I know it well  
My body was not hidden from you,  
While I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of*  
St. Paul urges us to become more aware of our body/sp. connection  
*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the HS  
Therefore glorify God in your body. ( I Cor 6)*

**The body is indeed wonderfully made. It communicates through the symbolic language of gesture....and it is eloquent in its communication  
Using a variety of postures which reflects and imparts the Spirit.**

**Thus we see:**

The Hasdic rocking  
The Buddhist sitting in lotus-position  
The Muslim prostrating toward Mecca  
The yogi balancing in asana  
The dervish spinning  
And the Christian making the sign of the cross, genuflecting, kneeling

Outer movements of the body when done prayerfully, mindfully  
Put us in touch with the Spirit in whom we live and move and have...

In giving physical expression to our prayers, we have a deeper  
Awareness of the Spirit. Deeper availability happens.  
We become more relaxed, alert, awake to the Spirit.

And it works in the other direction as well:  
The inner movement of the Spirit causes us to offer prayers  
With gestures and postures as well.  
I remember once celebrating the E. on Palm Sunday ...(tell story)

**In the article from your packet entitled, You fill up my senses – Janet Ruffing writes: Return to the body is replacing flight from the body, and appreciation for all forms of embodiment is rapidly becoming a hallmark of postmodern spirituality.**

In the early c's of the Xian. Faith – flight from the body appeared  
In such schools of thought

As Xian. Gnosticism and Docetism  
The gnostics taught that – we posseds a good spirit which was...  
Docetics taught that Jesus only appeared to have a body  
Dokien = to appear

The flight from the body also took place at least in W. Xian as a result  
Of the Enlightenment with so much emphasis being placed  
Prayer for many people began to be thought of as done from

**But as Ruffin points out**

We are experiencing a healing of this body-spirit dualism  
We see it in such prayer forms as yoga, liturgical dance,  
Walking the labyrinth, tai chi, and a variety of other ways  
Of giving physical expression to our prayers

**We are rediscovering that the most fundamental bodily functions of:  
breathing, walking, sitting, eating, are all ways of participating in The  
One who is the Source of our Being.**

**Body prayers that assist us in letting go of physical and mental tension –  
dropping beneath the “monkey mind” into the silent chapel of our spiritual  
hearts. These prayers assist us in being present to the present moment which  
is where we encounter God rather than being lost in thoughts about the past  
or future.**

1. Breath prayer with sacred word ruach. Based on Creation story and the resurrected Jesus' breathing on the disciples his peace.
2. Coming to your senses. God as the source of your hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, smelling. Based on Psalm 139
3. Simple gestures pointing to God as beyond us (transcendent mystery) beside us (incarnate companion) and within us (indwelling Spirit) Based on the Christianity's doctrine of the Trinity.

