

### **Walking as Spiritual Practice –Communal Centering Prayer on the Move**

**Out** – Whether you are going two directions (out and back) on the same path or walking a loop. “Out” is the first half of your walk. In this practice, we will treat the “out” portion of the walk much like *Centering* or *Contemplative Prayer*. Though you will need to keep your eyes open and your body moving, you will want to go at a pace that is not distracting for you (not too fast or too slow).

As *Centering Prayer* is a prayer of consent to God’s presence and work in us, we will need a point of focus to assist us when our minds try to take control of our interaction with God. Most instruction on *Centering Prayer* suggests choosing a sacred word to return to when we find our minds wandering. This word represents your desire to respond to God’s presence. Examples of sacred words are: Jesus, God, Abba, Love, Peace, Spirit, Trust, or something else. Before you begin your walk, you may wish to sit or stand for a moment and invite the Holy Spirit to suggest a word just for you. If finding or using a sacred word is a struggle for you, you may wish to simply focus on your breathing, listening as you breathe in and out, noticing the rhythm, or when and how you breathe through your nose and mouth, from your stomach or your chest.

In this communal version of walking as a spiritual practice, you will choose a partner or group to walk with. As this is not a race, you will want to find someone with a pace that is similar to your pace or a pace that is comfortable to walk. You will also need a partner whose walking time will match yours. If possible, plan to walk out for at least 20 minutes. You may wish to set an alarm or timer to let you know when “out” time is over and it is time to begin “back”.

As you walk, it is fine to notice the details God’s creation. But, remember, the focus is to consent to God’s presence and action within.

**Back** – On the second half of your walk, “back,” after some continued silence, you may choose to reflect on or discuss these questions:

- How was it to walk in silence with God and others? Were you anxious, calm, or joyful?
- How easy or difficult was it for you to remain in a state of consent? Were you able to let go of control? Was your sacred word or breathe helpful in this?
- Reflecting back on the “out” portion of the walk, have any insights or “ah has” come your way?

When your walk has ended, take a moment to pray with and for those you have walked with, giving thanks for and asking God’s blessing on each person in your group or duo.

Note \* though this was written to be used in a group or duo setting, this practice is easily adaptable for a singular person.

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