



Suggestions for Practicing the Jesus Prayer

Set a goal to practice the Jesus Prayer for at least five minutes every day. Choose a time and place conducive to uninterrupted prayer. You may practice the Jesus Prayer as a stationary (seated) meditation, or as a moving (walking) meditation. You may recite the Jesus Prayer in silence as an internalized meditation or aloud, taking time to hear each resonant sound and word. Spend your allotted time simply repeating this prayer, paying attention to the words and sounds, calling upon the Holy Name of the Lord with sincerity,

“Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy.” or
“Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on me.”

If you choose to **sit** while practicing the Jesus Prayer,

- Clear away and put on the floor any books, journal notebook, pen, etc. so that your hands and lap are free.
- If seated in a chair, place both feet flat on the floor.
- Maintain good posture, with head squarely (but comfortably) resting on spinal column.
- Place your hands (with palms facing up or down) on the tops of your thighs or fold them in your lap.
- You may choose to close your eyes or allow your gaze to rest on an image or object.
- Whether you close your eyes or choose to look at an object, breathe deeply, relax, rest; be still. Know that God is present. Open up your heart, mind, soul, and body in you, for you and with you.

If you choose to **walk** while practicing the Jesus Prayer,

- Choose a path clear of obstacles or potential impediments to unbroken prayer.
- During this time, avoid sidewalks frequented by neighbors or friends who may wish to stop and talk, stay away from busy streets, and bypass crowded public areas—allow yourself to venture down quiet routes, such as a scenic nature trail, a garden path, by a wooded side lot, etc.
- As you move, feel your feet firmly connected to the ground beneath you, fold your hands, slow your pace, and walk with intention.
- Breathe deeply, relax, rest, and still all unnecessary movements. Know that God is present. Open up your heart, mind, soul, and body in you, for you and with you.
- Do keep an eye out for hazards you may need to avoid, including people or objects you may need to bypass quietly, carefully, and uneventfully.





Returning to the Jesus Prayer

Whenever thoughts or emotions distract you (and they will), and you realize you have lost focus on the Jesus Prayer, without criticizing or judging yourself, return your attention to the Jesus Prayer. Your practice will become stronger and more effective each time you allow distractions to remain on the surface and pass. Let go of them for now (chances are they can wait), and return your concentration to the words, sounds, and gentle rhythm of the Jesus Prayer.

In many situations, the mental/emotional/physical responses you have while praying can actually be used to guide and even deepen your practice. Train yourself to regard such responses, honor them, but do not permit yourself to be carried away by them. You may allow yourself the freedom (briefly) to experience the thoughts, feelings, images, memories, etc. that come to your awareness; however, acknowledge them only momentarily without dwelling on them. Return your focus to the Jesus Prayer.

Choose a Breathing Pattern

Try to pattern your breathing with the repetition of the words. Some examples include:

[Inhale] "Lord, Jesus Christ"	[Inhale] (Silence)	[Inhale] "Lord, Jesus Christ"
[Exhale] "Son of God,"	"Lord, Jesus Christ" [Exhale]	"Son of God," [Exhale]
[Inhale] "Have mercy."	[Inhale] "Son of God," [Exhale]	[Inhale] "Have mercy on me,"
[Exhale] (Silence)	[Inhale] "Have mercy on me ."	" I am _____." [Exhale]
	[Exhale] (Silence)	

There is no "right way" or "wrong way" of breathing while practicing the Jesus Prayer. Breathing with intention is important, though, and so is deciding on a breathing pattern that feels natural, comfortable, and relaxing to you. You may choose solely to breathe through your nostrils, or using a combination of nose and mouth breathing, and you may find it helpful to occasionally let out a deep sigh from your mouth, e.g. a sustained "hahhhh" sound, emptying your lungs entirely, releasing tension and stress as you exhale. Deep breathing (deep inhalations and exhalations) may facilitate your practice, but you should not focus your attention on your breathing, but rather on the Jesus Prayer. Use breath to facilitate and reinforce your Jesus Prayer practice.

In the optional last segment of the prayer ("I am _____."), you may choose to fill in the blank with a descriptive word or phrase which "tells the truth" about your particular condition at the moment. As you continue to repeat the prayer, you may want to use the same word or phrase throughout the five minutes, or you may find different descriptive words or phrases emerging as your prayer evolves.





Using the Jesus Prayer to Pray for Others

You may choose to utilize the Jesus Prayer as a means of praying for others, for instance,

“Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on **Barbara.**”

“Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on **David.**”

“Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on **Jim, he is in pain.**”

“Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on **Evette, she is lost.**”

“Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on **this child of God, he is hungry.**”

“Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on **this child of God, she is suffering.**”

You may choose to utilize the Jesus Prayer as a means of praying for others in a small group, such as a Bible study, prayer circle, Board of Elders meeting, etc. You can utilize the Jesus Prayer silently to pray for others without them even knowing you are doing so! In such situations and group settings, always remember to include yourself in the prayers, since you are an important part of the whole.

