



Free Listening Hearts Program Materials

## *Heartlinks*

A Library of Meditations for Individuals or Groups

### **Meditation with the Breath**

*This simple meditation draws your attention to the breath, gently engaging your body. It can be done sitting in a chair or on the floor, depending on what is most comfortable for you. Find a quiet place. Wear comfortable clothes, and remove items such as shoes, glasses, or heavy jewelry.*



We need to listen with our bodies as well as our minds, for God speaks to us through our pains and pleasures, through our wills, emotions, and senses. – *Listening Hearts*, p. 31

1. Take a deep breath; become settled and quiet. Gently survey the circumstances of your life at this moment, taking time to identify any question or issue with which you may be wrestling.
2. Read the following scriptural passage, or if you prefer, select another passage that you'd like to meditate with today.

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**I make you hear new things, hidden things that you have not known. – Isaiah 48:6b**

Reflect upon the passage. Read the words over and over to yourself, allowing them to sink into your body, mind, and soul. Allow God's presence to permeate you and your life situation.

3. Take a moment now to check in with your body, identifying any places of tension you might feel. Resettle yourself if necessary, sitting comfortably in whatever position feels right to you.

Begin to slow down your breath. Close your eyes, breathing through your nose. Feel the cool air coming in through your nostrils, filling your belly and lungs, and then feel the warm air moving out of your nostrils, as your body slowly empties of air.

Attuned to the sensation of your breathing, you might now use a word or phrase from your Scriptural passage to provide further centering, repeating it over and over with your inhales and exhales. If your mind wanders, don't worry about it. Simply return to your word or words, and the awareness of your breath.

For those who would like to further engage the body in this meditation, continue following these instructions for relaxing the muscles sequentially, one area at a time. (Others may feel their meditation is complete, having focused on the breath as described in the previous step; if so, stop here and simply conclude with a short prayer, as in step 6).

4. Begin at the top of your body, with your forehead and scalp. Become aware of any tension there as you inhale, then let go of that tension with the warm air of your exhale. Imagine breathing cooling, peaceful air into your forehead, then letting go of any clenching or anxiety held there as you exhale from that spot.

Invite the Holy Spirit into your body with each inhale and exhale, repeating your word or phrase if you would like, as you slowly go through the rest of your body in the same way. Inhale and exhale out tension in your eyes, jaws, neck, shoulders, arms, etc., all the way down to your toes.

5. When you have relaxed each part of your body and are awash in the Spirit, return to sitting in stillness, breathing slowly and naturally. Continue to – or return to – repeating your word or words silently as you inhale and exhale.
6. Say a final prayer, offering this time of meditation to God.