

# Facilitator Instructions for Breath Prayer

## [Optional] Materials:

- Pens and paper for notetaking during or after

## Introductions:

Open in prayer. Ask each person to introduce herself/himself [if necessary]; [optional] ask them to share 1-2 sentences about what led them to participate today. If time allows, you can have a time of praying out loud in small groups of two's or three's or simply pray as a small group if you have 3-4 people present. Rather than spend time explaining our prayers/praises to one another, go straight to prayer and speak our prayers directly to God. In other words, after one person finishes praying, another person can pray as the Spirit leads for what was just lifted up; or he/she can move on to his/her own prayers/praises. This is meant to help us pray in the Spirit and cast all our burdens on the Lord (Ps 55:22). The goal is to maximize our time praying.

## Intro Remarks [for 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and when newcomers are present]:

Today we are doing the Breath Prayer, also known as the Jesus Prayer. It's meant to remind us that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are always as close to us as our breathing. In fact, the lyrics of a Jason Gray song called *The Sound of Our Breathing* reminds us that the phonetic pronunciation of Yahweh sounds like our inhale (Yah) and exhale (weh). So, with our very first breath of life to our very last breath (and every breath in between) we are saying His name.

The Breath Prayer is so simple it can be done throughout the day:

- When you first open your eyes in the morning or close them at night
- Before each meal
- Before an appointment or meeting
- During an appointment or meeting
- While driving or doing chores

It's meant to help us pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:16-18) and lift our worries or praise in a quick "arrow prayer" fashion. It can also be practiced like a rosary by using prayer beads or simply using our fingers to repetitively say the prayer 10-20 times as a centering prayer experience.

The first part of the breath prayer is choosing a name for God on our inhale such as: **Abba Father, El Shaddai, Lord, God of Grace, Yahweh, Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, Mighty Warrior, Emmanuel, etc**

The second part of the breath prayer is naming what we want or need from God for our exhale: **Give me strength; fill me with Your peace; use me for Your kingdom; fill me use me; help me in my unbelief; help me trust you; heal [me, mom, etc], protect my family.**

An example of a silent breath prayer while in a group setting is: **Lord Jesus Christ Son of God [while inhaling], have mercy on me [while exhaling].**

Everyone can do the same breath prayer or customize their own breath prayer based on the examples above or your suggestions. Does anyone have questions?

## Let's Begin:

I invite you to sit quietly for a minute to choose the name and prayer (or praise) you want to breathe in and out today. You may want to open your Bible for inspiration. [PAUSE for several minutes depending on how much time or help people need.]

Let's open with a devotion and a guided silent examination of conscience to honor our holy Lord and cleanse our hearts. [see page 3 for a suggested devotional from Psalm 66].

PAUSE for 5 seconds then explain by saying:

"If you are ready, now let's sit for 2 minutes of silence as we breath in God's name and exhale our prayer or praise. Slowly breath in and out in this way 10-20 times. Depending on how slowly (& silently) you recite your breath prayer, you may finish early; in which case, I invite you to enjoy the peace of being still while others finish. Let us begin."

PAUSE for ~ 1-2 minutes

Close the time of silence with short prayer of gratitude by beginning:

"For those who are ready, let us close in thanksgiving for this time and space...."

If in a group setting and time permits...ask whether anyone would like to share their experience? What name for God did you choose and why?

Optional info to share with the group:

If you choose to do this by yourself, speak the words out loud like this, "Lord Jesus Son of God [**then** inhale], Have mercy on me [while exhaling]." It takes some practice to speak out loud and breath in a rhythm! Some find it useful to focus on one breath prayer every week while some change it daily or even throughout the day as the Spirit leads. Whatever the case, it helps us abide in the Father and He in us (John 15:4).

**Close the Group in prayer** and pray for God to lead others to the next group meeting; for His will to be done in our lives; and that we may tell others of God's power and peace when we practice stillness and listening.

## Opening Devotional

### *In preparation for Breath Prayer*

In preparation for this special time with God, it is strongly urged that we examine our hearts, and detect any unconfessed sin. Scripture records that God requires His people to repent of their sins before He will hear their prayers. King David said:

*Come and hear, all of you who reverence the Lord, and I will tell you what He did for me: For I cried to Him for help, with praises ready on my tongue. He would not have listened if I had not confessed my sins. But He listened! He heard my prayer! He paid attention to it! Blessed be God who didn't turn away when I was praying, and didn't refuse me His kindness and love. (Psalm 66:16-20)*

Let's Begin by a time of silent meditation to examine our Hearts (~1-2 min) [Pause after each of these to allow a time of reflection]

Gracious Lord, help us to detect our Unconfessed Sins

Our obvious sins

Less obvious sins

The Sins of Omission (our inaction)

The Sins of Commission (our actions)

Sins that have caused us to leave you, Oh Lord –

Our worldly mindedness,

Our self-centeredness,

Our spiritual indifference,

Our unwillingness to share our faith in Jesus Christ with others,

Our unwillingness to make sufficient time in Your Word,

Our unwillingness to make sufficient time in prayer,

Our poor relationships - with family, friends, pastor(s); other members of the church community and those in the world.

[Pause]

Lord we confess and repent of our sins and receive your gracious forgiveness. Thanks be to God. Amen.

(Devotional adapted by Gloria Stevens from Dr. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ  
[www.nairobichapel.org/NC/Bulletin/HowToPrepareYourselfSpiritually.pdf](http://www.nairobichapel.org/NC/Bulletin/HowToPrepareYourselfSpiritually.pdf))