

Heartfulness: centering prayer essay sample



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Introduction.

Centering Prayer is a term that refers to the prayer that comes from the heart or rather simply put the prayer of the heart which attributes its description from the anonymous writer of spiritual classic. This Prayer traces its origin from the Trappist monastery in Massachusetts.

During this contemporary period, the prayer was discovered by figures like Cistercians, fathers William Meninger, Basil Pennington and Thomas Keating. This is a prayer which is totally contemplative form of which St. John describes it to be the practise of ' loving attentiveness'.

Discussion

Centering prayers being a method of silent prayer, prepares the participants to receive the gift or present of contemplative prayer. This contemplative prayer is a prayer in which one experience Gods presence within those practising it. Here, it denotes that through centering prayer, one experiences the closeness of God-even closer than their breathing, thinking and to the extreme end, closer than their own consciousness. The prayer stipulates that it is relationship with God and also instils and maintains the discipline of upholding and promoting that relationship.

According to the proponents of this prayer i. e. the likes of Father Keating, centering prayer is not meant to act as a substitute of any other kind of prayers or rather is not meant to replace it at any given moment, but it adds a deeper meaning to all other kinds of prayers and also, facilitates the mobility i. e. movement from active modes of prayer be it verbal, mental or

even effective prayer into receptive prayer of taking refuge to God (Keating 2007). The prayer insists that it is a personal relationship with God And as an avenue beyond talking to Jesus or talking to God through Jesus as the case with ordinary prayers and hence communes one directly to God.

Just like all other contemplative prayers, centering prayer attributes its sources to the inner dwelling trinity i. e. Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Actually, centering prayer focuses in strengthening and deepening the relationship with Jesus Christ. The effects of this prayer are quite immense as it actually build and strengthens the community of perpetual faith and bonds them in friendship of mutuality and love.

Drawing their ideas to the breadth of diversity that involves cantering prayers the participants admit that it is a blend of wide spectrum of many Christian traditions. They also cites that centering prayers develops the person's relations with God and Christ Jesus to that extreme point beyond ones words, thinking and general feelings (Keating 2007)

Centering prayer is actually a contemplative practices which is a very simple method in which one opens up himself to God and consents to the presence of God in human beings and His actions with him as an individual(human beings). By using the word 'contemplating' this does not mean the issue of rumination and or reflection. The term is used in its classical sense i. e. being with God: hence through this prayer and according to Keating, it can be alluded to two friends sitting both in silence but in each others' presence. This implies therefore, that through centering prayer the person transforms

beyond virtual images, emotions and his personal or rather, his own thoughts.

When for example Keating (2007) uses the word “contemplation,” however, it is not referring to rumination or reflection. The term is used here in its classical sense: being with God. Thus, through centering prayer one moves beyond images, emotions, and thoughts. According to Keating, it is like “two friends sitting in silence, being in each other’s presence.” Basing on Keating, entering prayer constitute silence, stillness, patience and sometimes going over and over again something i. e. repeating something and exhibiting a practise of not knowing. As one seeks God’s presence. Here it means that one has to quite his owns faculties to be in communion with God’s presence. The guidelines involved in centering prayer include, choosing a sacred word as a symbol of ones intention to consent to God’s presence, engaging ones thought while returning gently to sacred word and remaining in silence while closing ones eyes, among others.

To augment the idea, it is presupposed that centering prayer is based on the sermon of Jesus Christ on the mountain which says that when one prays he has to go to his inner room, close the door and pray to the father in Secret. Hence by doing so, the Father (God) who sees in secret, will always repay one (Mathew 6: 6). Therefore this shows that their practise is in line with Jesus teachings especially the sermon on the mountain which contain best advise on cultivating and having a puree relationship with God and His people.

Criticism

Many people especially devoted Catholics have been so critical on this meditative nurture of centering prayers. They argue that this is totally unchristian and all its principles and the teachings go against the biblical teachings.

According to them, they argue that contrary to beliefs that centering prayer is compatible with Christianity especially catholic, the truth of the matter is that the methods and techniques applied does not in any way associate with or even compatible with the traditions that Catholics are attributed with. As a matter of fact, this prayer does not involve either of the Christian ways of praying. Mostly; the prayer is always at the level human beings faculty which is always the way man operates, but not God.

It is further argued that this prayer is a dangerous practise since it can put a person in a changed state of consciousness and open one to spiritual connection that is in conflict with scripture. Instead, we are to seek God in prayers that are non-repetitious, with a focus on God's word and truth, with an active mind seeking to find the true and living God through the revelation of the Scripture and communion with His son Jesus. Therefore, to them, one should avoid whatever the church involving in this or promoting it. They also say that the intent of the technique is to give somebody to the state of his own instead of experiencing the presence of God. Furthering there arguments, they also say that this is a form of hypnosis.

Conclusion.

Centering prayers therefore, promotes the concept of self inner examination and the innermost reflection of which God is, how one can achieve fully

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communion with him. Deeper reflection of ones thought about God makes one to achieve the desired communion with god in person directly. This therefore implies that centering prayer is not a method but a way of promoting or rather, developing a relationship with God, a way of refreshing oneself, among other things.

References:

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New King James Version Bible, Mathew chapters 5-7