



Restorative Prayer™

Practice Guidebook

Supporting Calm, Presence, &
Connection through your
Nervous System

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20-Minute Restorative Prayer™ Session



This is a sacred space—a practice into embodied rest, receptivity, and restoration in Christ. You are invited to come as you are, with your breath, your body, and your longing for connection. This 20-minute practice is a gentle path inward—toward regulation, presence, and the quiet voice of God who dwells within.

Before we begin, take a moment to find a quiet, comfortable space where you can be fully present. You may stand or sit, on a chair or on the floor, whichever feels safest for you today. This is a space of gentleness, slowness, and deep rest in God's presence.

There is no rush, no expectation — only an invitation to be held by Him.

Let's begin with the Word of God to center the intention for this time:

"At that time Jesus said,
'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
because you have hidden these things from the wise
and the intelligent
and have **revealed them to infants;**
yes, Father, for **such was your gracious will.**
All things have been handed over to me by my Father;
and no one knows the Son except the Father,
and no one knows the Father except the Son
and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
**Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying
heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.**
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and **you will find rest for your souls.**
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'"

- Matthew 11: 25-30

What is Restorative Prayer™?

Restorative Prayer™ is a trauma-informed, nervous-system-focused, Christ-centered practice designed to help you shift from stress or disconnection into a state of ventral vagal safety—a place where communion with God, others, and yourself becomes possible again.

Restorative Prayer™ integrates:

Breathwork for vagus nerve regulation

Polyvagal theory for nervous system support

Somatic movement for grounding and release

Catholic Contemplative Spirituality for soulful connection

Theology of the Body, honoring the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit

What Restorative Prayer™ is Not

It is **not** a yoga class.

It is **not** a New Age spiritual practice.

It is **not** Eastern or non-Christian meditation.

Although it includes movement and breath awareness, this practice is intentionally grounded in a Catholic worldview. It is inspired by the Christian tradition of contemplative prayer, the incarnational theology of the body, and the belief that the Holy Spirit speaks through our bodies as well as our hearts and minds.

You are invited into a prayerful experience that integrates neuroscience with the sacred—offering tools that support healing while remaining faithful to the Gospel.

Why it Works

For those who are unsure of this practice, I want to offer you some reassurance: **Restorative Prayer™ is grounded in neuroscience and evidenced-based psychotherapies to support the building blocks for wholeness and holiness.**

This practice approaches healing from the understanding that human beings are **interconnected** - body, mind, and spirit - and that our healing is a **bottom-up process** to uplift the body towards balance, then the mind, and finally the spirit. This is because our spiritual and psychological wellbeing is deeply intertwined with the health of our brains and bodies. And when we feel anxious, frozen, overwhelmed, or numb, our nervous system is doing its best to protect us.

Our nervous systems are always scanning for threat and safety on an autonomic, subconscious level. These functions form the foundation for our brains and minds to interpret and engage with the world, often before we get to think or chose. And depending on the level of danger/safety our nervous systems shift between different “states”:

Fight or flight (sympathetic) State: hyper-alert, anxious, angry, or restless

Freeze or shut down (dorsal vagal) State: numb, disconnected, collapsed

Safe and connected (ventral vagal) State: calm, present, grounded, relational

This practice uses breath, movement, and prayer to gently **guide your nervous system into a ventral vagal state** — where you feel safe enough to connect with God, others, and yourself.

A Trauma-Informed Invitation

I respect you and where you find yourself today.

You are always free to pause, adapt, or skip any part of this practice.

Listen to your body.

You are in control.

This is a space of gentleness.

As you move through the practice, notice what feels okay and safe from what feels overwhelming and too much. Some discomfort may be okay but is much better modulated with direct support from your mental health provider.

You are invited to:

- Keep your eyes open or closed—whatever feels safest.
- Modify or skip movements if anything feels uncomfortable.
 - Come back to this practice when you're ready.
 - You are your own sanctuary.

20-Minute Restorative Prayer™ Session

Let's Begin



If you're ready,
let's begin our practice

Centering Breath & Grounding (2-3 minutes)



Let's begin by *gently grounding our minds in the present moment of our breath.*

Feel your feet on the ground or your seat supported by the chair or floor.

Notice the breath moving in and out.

You're not here to perform—just to be.

Let's take a deep breath in through the nose... and slowly out the mouth.

One more—inhale... and exhale with a soft sigh.

Allow yourself to land on the following scripture:

“Be still and know that I am God.” - Psalm 46:10

Notice if you can find a handle for how the Lord shows up for you right now. How is he speaking to you? Is it an image, a word, or sensation? Or maybe there is silence. That is also the Lord - He is waiting for you to soften as we move through this practice. We are practicing letting go. Trying less so we can notice his promptings in the present moment.

Vagus Nerve Toning (5 minutes)



We'll begin going deeper here with simple breath and sound to *tone the vagus nerve, activating our connection-oriented state within our nervous system.*

Inhale for 4... and exhale for 6.

Let's do that again. **Inhale... and exhale slowly.**

Now, we'll add a hum, deep sighs—on the exhales.

Inhale... and hum: 'mmm...'

Focus on the sensation of vibration in your chest, throat, and face.

Now you can continue sighing out, or try **chanting the name or Jesus or Abba as you breath here for a few more minutes**

Let your breath be a prayer here.

Gentle Movement

(7-8 minutes)



We'll now move into gentle postures to support safety and release.

Neck rolls: Gently roll your head in one direction, then the other, listening in our sensations here as we expand and contract this area associated with our voice and regulation.

Shoulder rolls: Inhale—shoulders up. Exhale—roll them down and back, exploring the sensations around the shoulders. What part of your inner world does this sensation bring to mind.

Spinal movement: Seated cat-cow — arch and round your spine with each breath. We are now moving into expansion and contraction of our core and back, where we hold so much of ourselves - our fears, choices, responsibilities, and burdens.

Swaying: Let your body gently sway side to side, letting yourself be soothed by your innermost self (and by the Lord if that feels okay) in this gentle rocking motion for regulation.

Cross-body tapping: Gently tap your opposite shoulders or legs in a slow rhythm to engage the parasympathetic nervous system through bilateral stimulation of opposite hemispheres of the brain. This can be a time where you recall where you felt safety or loosening in your body and where you felt fear or tightness.

Each movement is a prayer - offering blessing and care to your nervous system.

Stillness & Presence

(3-5 minutes)



Come into stillness now.

Place a hand on your heart or belly. Feel the breath.

Notice any sensations. Let them be.

If it feels safe, **whisper a simple prayer:**

"Here I am, Lord."

"I am held."

"Come Holy Spirit."

Rest in this quiet space.

Find that handle again for the Lord's presence - that sensation in the body, or an image, word, or silence. Hold your attention on this handle for a few minutes. Return your attention back when it wanders off.

Allow God to minister to your body and soul.

Closing



Gently begin to move your fingers, your toes, bringing awareness back to the room around you. Know that you can return to this place of peace anytime.

Let's close with this scripture verse:

"we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." – Romans 5:3-5

When you are ready, open your eyes.

You can return to this practice as often as you like—daily, weekly, or during times of stress, transition, grief, or prayer.

May your breath be a prayer.

May your body be a temple.

May you know you are deeply, fully loved.

Thank you for practicing with me today.

In His Peace,

Kolbe

Reflection + Integration



How was that for you?

You can ask yourself the following questions to prompt this inner exploration:

What did I notice in my body during this practice?

Did anything shift?

What moment felt most like prayer or connection?

Where did I feel God's presence?

If you were able to come up with some answers to these questions, it might be worthwhile to record them in a journal or notes app. You can keep a log and notice any fluctuations or trends as you accumulate some data on your experience.

If you'd ever like to go deeper, you can join me for workshops or groups where we dive deeper into Restorative Prayer™ as both a practice and palce for co-regulation with each other and with God. Go to my website to find a full list of my offerings, or email me at letsconnect@healingwithkolbe.com to inquire about upcoming events.