

The Beloved Prayer
By Arthur LeClair

The Beloved Prayer was written by Arthur LeClair and the guided meditation around the prayer was written by Henri Nouwen. It can be used in solitude, with a spiritual director, or in a small prayer group.

Sit relaxed and at ease. Have confidence that God's love will show itself in some way. For the first ten minutes, without fuss, say the following words slowly and fervently:

Jesus, You are the Beloved.

Repeat the words as necessary. Let your heart fill with nonverbal praise and thanksgiving. Let distractions float by, even when they press upon you. After a while the distractions will seem less and less urgent as you let them go. Simply be with Jesus in this precious moment.

Then, gently and without fanfare, move on to the next ten minutes. Paul reminds us in Romans 9:25 that we too are destined to become the Beloved. Another color is added to the beauty of this scene:

Jesus, I am the Beloved.

Let your core-being soak up God's favor. At first, this shift might seem jarring. But rest in the depth of prayer and let this truth settle in.

Then go on to the next ten minutes. I used to imagine that this part would be a distraction, but I have found it to be a rich and holy connection with others.

Jesus, we (all) are the Beloved.

Let people come into your heart: a neighbor, a friend, a relative, someone you read about in the morning paper. The important thing is not to exclude anyone. Your heart will bring to the surface the ones you need to give attention to.

At the end, simply conclude with a word of thanksgiving, or Lord's Prayer.

This form of prayer can be done individually or in a group. It can be done on the way to work, in the quiet of early morning, or in the evening before retiring. When you do this as a group, you will find that the members of the group come out of the depths slowly and need a space of silence before speaking again.

Those who have used this prayer speak about a deep healing that takes place within them. If you stay with this form of prayer on a regular basis over a period of time, you will live with a clearer understanding of your place in the universe.

Reflect and Journal:

Write a two-sentence answer to the question: Who am I?

What does your answer reveal about what you value?

In what areas of your life are you prone to self-rejection?

Source: *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith* by Henri Nouwen