

Body Prayer

Julian of Norwich, a 14th Century English Mystic was a pioneer of body prayer or embodied praying. For Julian, body prayer is prayer through motion with the intention of connecting the practitioner to the divine energy source.

Julian of Norwich experienced severe bodily pain when she was thirty years old that caused her to go into an altered state for many hours. It was during her illness that she received 16 visions, or "showings" as she called them, from God, which she later recorded in *Revelations of Divine Love*.

In her writings, Julian devised the four stages of prayer through movement. The four states are await, allow, accept, and attend. The movements help to quiet the mind and body and bring us into a receptive state to receive God. It is a healing connection and a place of stillness even in movement. It makes sacred our bodies as a vessel for divine love.

Julian wrote about movement in prayer as a "oneing" with the divine. (By the way, her God had a distinctly feminine aspect as Mother.) She wrote, "The fruit and the purpose of prayer is to be *oned* with God and like God in all things."

The 4 Dispositions: Body Prayer by Julian of Norwich

Take a few minutes to pay attention to your body here and now. Let your attention sink deeper into your body. Breathe. Remember your being's inherent oneness, through these simple words, postures, and intentions (the words are from the Order of Julian's motto. *The italicized words I added.*)

AWAIT (hands at waist, cupped up to receive): Await God's presence, not as you expect, hope, or imagine, but just as it is in this moment. *This is to remind us that the agency of prayer comes from God. God initiates prayer within us.*

ALLOW (reach up, hands open): Allow a sense of God's presence (or not) to come and be what it is, without meeting your expectations. *Our job simply is to be in a state of receptivity/readiness for God to work in and on us.*

ACCEPT (hands at heart, cupped towards body): Accept as a gift whatever comes or does not come. Accept that you are not in charge. Accept the infinity of God's presence, present whether or not you are aware. *The power of God within you might be joyful, challenging, peaceful, or unsettling and our only task is to accept it.*

ATTEND (hands outstretched, ready to be responsive): Attend to what you are called to, actions that God invites you to from this stance of openness. *How will we act upon this conversation with God? How will it manifest in our state of mind, hearts, and actions in the world?*

