

Spiritual Practices: The Labyrinth

Artwork by Dale Forder

There are a large variety of ways to connect with God and to make space to hear from Him. Below is simply one spiritual practice that may be helpful for you as you seek to find ways to develop your spirituality and relationship with God.

Although the labyrinth may be new to many people today, its use as a spiritual tool can be traced back to several ancient cultures. The earliest known Christian labyrinth goes back to AD 350 and is located on the wall of a church in Algeria, with the words “Sancta Ecclesia” (holy church) inscribed in its center. Worshipers entering the church would trace the labyrinth with their finger in order to focus their thoughts and open themselves up to the presence of God. In the Middle Ages, most commonly inlaid in Cathedral floors, the labyrinth reappeared as a way of having spiritual and physical pilgrimage towards the heart of God.

A prayer labyrinth is a sacred pattern that leads you on a prescribed path to its center and back out again. Different from mazes that have dead ends and are more like puzzles, a labyrinth leads us surely to its centre, the paths of which seem to meander and double back, reflecting the journey of life. As we move inward we shed whatever would keep us from receiving from God and moving closer to His heart, and as we move outward we bring the gift of God to others.

The directions below are given to use with a finger labyrinth, using your finger to trace your journey in and out. However the same directions work for walking labyrinths or simply choosing a walking route, one that you go out and come back along the same path.

Begin by pausing. Still yourself in the presence of God, inviting the Holy Spirit to journey with you.

Moving inward. Put your finger at the entrance to the labyrinth. As you slowly move inwards, tracing the path with your finger, prayerfully shed whatever would keep you from receiving from God, moving closer to His heart.

- What ‘meanderings’ are taking you away from the heart of God?
- What are you holding onto that is not yours to carry?

Talk to God about these things, pausing to confess and release.

At the centre take time to be inwardly still, present with God at the centre of your being.

- What might God be trying to show you about Himself?
- What might he want to say to you in the midst of your life circumstances?

Moving outwards, tracing your previous path, ponder your experience and notice how God has given you a refreshed perspective over the same path. Worship and celebrate. Invite God to integrate what you have received at the centre into your outer world.

- How might God want you to outwardly bring God’s presence as a gift to be shared with others?



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