

## Postures of Prayer & Praise “outer representations of an inner reality”

*As one who teaches on embodied prayer, loving God with your whole self (including the often-excluded body), and fully embodied living, I am often asked where to begin. This 7-part series is an exploration of postures of prayer and praise — designed as a starting (or restarting point) for those wanting to engage their bodies in prayer, worship and spiritual journey. This can be done individually or in a group, and it makes a wonderful 7-week series with a group of people desiring to seek the Lord with their whole selves together.*

### Introduction:

Physical postures of worship are found throughout scripture. They are outer representations of inner “postures” of the heart OR “outer representations of an inner reality.” These postures of the body and soul are disciplines that require our attention daily, weekly, yearly. They are not based on our emotions and circumstances but require our devotion and awareness despite how we feel or what we see around us.

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A Spotify playlist called “Postures of Worship” (under profile the “Faith&Flow Jody”) is available at this link and all songs mentioned are on this list:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6VW02BqfWvltJOxBiu9BkP?si=89055bb3eb3847ee>

## **Postures of Prayer & Praise Practice 1: Our Entire Being**

**Let's start with our breath.**

**3-part breath:** Breathe into the belly for several breaths (diaphragmatic breath). Then breathe into the ribcage (thoracic breath) for several breaths, feeling the back and ribcage expand as you inhale. Next, breathe into your upper chest or heart space for several breaths. Last, return to deep belly breath as you consider this passage:

**Luke 10:25-28 VCE**

Just then a scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures and Law tried to trap Jesus.

Scholar: Teacher, what must I do to experience the eternal life?

Jesus (*answering with a question*): What is written in the *Hebrew* Scriptures? How do you interpret their answer to your question?

Scholar: You shall love—"love the Eternal One your God with everything you have: all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind"<sup>[d]</sup>—and "love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>[e]</sup>

Jesus: *Perfect*. Your answer is correct. Follow these commands and you will live.

The scholar interacting with Jesus was referring to two Hebrew passages:

[d] Deut 6:5 VCE You should love Him, your True God, with all your heart and soul, *with every ounce of your strength*.

[e] Lev 19:18 Do not seek revenge or hold a grudge against any of your people. Instead, love your neighbor as you love yourself, for I am the Eternal One.

**The Amplified translation says it like this:** You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart *and* mind and with all your soul and with all your strength [*your entire being*].

**Your entire being....**

As you breathe deeply into your torso, imagine God's love filling your entire being.

*(Pause before moving on)*

**Intention Setting (you can also use these as journal prompts):**

As you come to this practice, how do you begin?

- Perhaps you have never used your body to pray or worship?
- Perhaps you are a regular to Christ-centered movement?
- Or perhaps you're looking for an embodied way to spend an intentional time of prayer and worship before the Lord?
- What is your intention? For today's movement practice and for this entire series?
- Can you create a breath prayer to guide you through your movement practice?  
For example: Inhale "I will..." & Exhale "love the Lord."

*(Pause before moving on)*

**Nehemiah 8:6** Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people *lifted their hands and responded*, "Amen! Amen!" Then they *bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground*.

In this scripture it might appear we only see two postures of prayer: Standing with hands lifted (aka, Upward Salute) and Lying Prostrate (Prone). However, unless we're doing burpees, we know that there are many more postures required to get us from standing with hands lifted to prostrate with our faces to the ground!

**Standing → to Bowing → to Kneeling → to Falling Prostrate**

### **Whole Body Worship: Standing to Bowing to Kneeling to Falling Prostrate**

#### **Start: Standing**

Stand with your weight evenly distributed between both feet. Spread out the toes and feel the feet on the ground. Gently hug the leg muscles to the leg bones and engage your abdominals. Hands can rest at your side or in prayer hands at heart center. Meditate on this passage as you stand:

⇒ I will **stand** and offer You my thanks, Eternal One, in the presence of others; I will sing of Your greatness among the nations *no matter where I am*. Psalm 108:3 VCE

#### **→ to Bowing**

Fold forward at the waist, slightly bending your knees if you'd like. Shake the head yes and no to relax the tension in the neck and allow the head and arms to dangle freely. You can do this seated in a chair, with the hands resting on your lap or dangling the arms and moving the head slowly back and forth ("shaking" the head "no") to let go of neck tension (no need to dangle the head if seated). Meditate on this passage as you bow:

⇒ I will **bow down** [in worship] toward Your holy temple and give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word together with Your name. Ps 138:2 AMP

#### **→ to Kneeling**

Placing the hands on the floor, bring the knees gently down to the floor. You can use a folded blanket under the knees to pad the knees. If kneeling is impossible for you, you can stay seated in a chair, placing your hands on your lap and bow your head. Meditate on these passages as you kneel:

⇒ All nations whom You have made shall come and **kneel down** in worship before You, O Lord. And they shall glorify Your name. Ps 86:9 AMP

⇒ Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow** (knees of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth), and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philip 2:9-11

### → to Falling Prostrate

Lower the body all the way to the floor to lie prone on the floor. You can stack and place your hands under your forehead to give yourself space to breathe and keep your neck straight. Feel free to do this posture seated, with your head resting on folded hands on a table in front of you. Meditate on this passage as you lie prostrate before God:

⇒ Abram **bowed low, his face and body flat on** the ground. Gen 17:3 VCE

As we move from standing before the Lord to lying prostrate, we go from a place of thanksgiving and high praise to humbling ourselves before a God who willingly accepts our praises, yet also asks for a repentant heart. As you consider these postures and the scriptures above, practice flowing through these postures several times (as you are able). Move to: *Body Mind & Soul* by Phil Wickham if you would like.

**Standing → to Bowing → to Kneeling → to Falling Prostrate**

*(Pause before moving on)*

### Ending Scripture Meditation: Psalm 103:1-2

Let all that I am praise the LORD;  
with my whole heart, I will praise his  
holy name.

Let all that I am praise the LORD;  
may I never forget the good things he  
does for me. NLT

Bless *and* affectionately praise the LORD,  
O my soul, and all that is [deep] within  
me, *bless* His holy name.

Bless *and* affectionately praise the LORD,  
O my soul, and do not forget any of His  
benefits. AMP

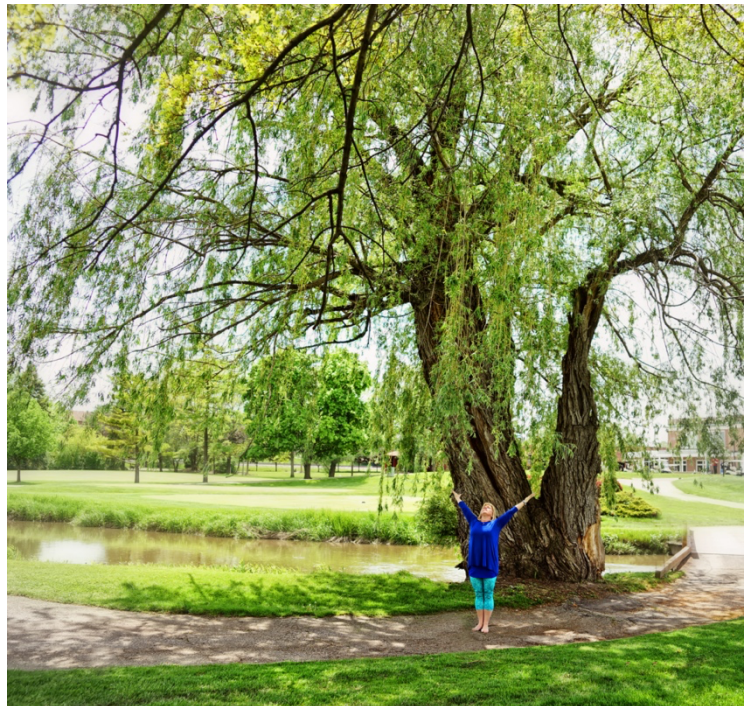
O my soul, *come*, praise the Eternal with  
all that is in me—*body, emotions, mind,*  
*and will—every part of who I am—*  
praise His holy name.

O my soul, *come*, praise the Eternal;  
*sing a song from a grateful heart; sing and* never forget all the good He has done. VCE

With my whole heart, with my whole life, and with my innermost being,  
I bow in wonder and love before you, the holy God!

Yahweh, you are my soul's celebration.

How could I ever forget the miracles of kindness you've done for me? TPT





## Postures of Prayer & Praise Practice 2: Hands & Heart

**Let's start with our breath.**

**3-part breath:** Breathe into the belly for several breaths (diaphragmatic breath). Then breathe into the ribcage for several breaths, feeling the back expand as you inhale (thoracic breath). Next, breathe into your upper chest or heart space for several breaths. Last, return to deep belly breath with prayer hands at your heart center.

**Psalm 46:10** says: *“Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”* As you bring your hands to your heart in a posture of stillness and prayer, take a moment to ask, *“How is God exalted in my life?”*

*(Pause before moving on)*

**Intention Setting (you can also use these as journal prompts):**

As you come to this practice, how do you begin?

- Does placing your hands in this prayer posture feel familiar or foreign?
- What prayers and petitions do you bring to today's practice?
- What is your intention? For today's movement practice and for this entire series?
- Can you create a breath prayer to guide you through your movement practice?  
For example: Inhale “I pray...” & Exhale “with thanksgiving.”

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Hands Together – Prayer Hands**

Palms together or folded/clasped together is a posture we typically think of when we think of a posture of prayer. This posture has been used by many religions as a posture of prayer, and there are some that even postulate that Jesus might have learned this prayer posture from Buddhist monks during his time as a young child in Egypt.

**Philippians 4:6** – Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by ***prayer and petition***, with **thanksgiving**, present your requests to God.

**Colossians 4:2** – Devote yourselves to ***prayer***, being ***watchful and thankful***.

When we are anxious, our hands are wringing or even shaking, but notice the attitudes of thankfulness and watchfulness that are to accompany our prayers. It's not about what He can give us, but about acknowledging and being thankful for what He has already given us and being watchful to see how He will answer our prayers, sometimes in ways we don't expect.

Placing your palms together, explore placing prayer hands in various places about the body: at the heart center, to your forehead, above the head, behind the head, at the belly. Do the various positions affect your thoughts or feelings?

Settle in on two of the prayer hand placements (like forehead and heart). On your inhale place the hands on one of the locations (like forehead) and then on your exhale move your hands to the second location (your heart). Move the prayer hands back and forth between each location with each inhale and exhale.

### **Hands to Heart – Pondering/Treasuring**

**Job 23:12** – I have not departed from the commands of his lips;  
I have ***treasured the words of his mouth*** more than my daily bread.

**Luke 2:16-20** – So they hurried off and found Mary, Joseph and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary ***treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart***. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Treasuring and pondering means taking time to remember all God has done in your life, to consider what He has planned for your life, and to look at those gifts/talents that are uniquely yours to do that which God has uniquely designed you for. It is being still and quiet before the Lord. As you explore this beautiful posture of prayer, ask God to make your heart His home. Place your hands on your heart, and take time to ponder and treasure all that he has done in your life. (Listen to: *My Heart, Your Home* by Watermark).

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Ending Scripture Meditation: Acts 17:28**

In him we live and move and have our being. ESV

For in Him we live and move and exist [that is, in Him we actually have our being]. AMP

We live in God; we move in God; we exist in God. VCE

It is through him that we live and function and have our identity. TPT

He gives us the power to live, to move, and to be who we are. CEV



## Postures of Prayer & Praise Practice 3: Petition & Praise

### **Start with the breath.**

Listen to *Sunday* (feat. Rob Bell) by The Liturgists, using the exhale to let go of that which does not serve you in this moment and the inhale to breathe life into the dead places within.

### **Hands Raised – Praise**

**I Kings 8:22-23** – Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, ***spread out his hands toward heaven*** and said: "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way."

Notice in these verses above as they raise their hands they are:

- 1<sup>st</sup> praising God;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> witnessing in front of everyone;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> remembering God's covenant of love;
- 4<sup>th</sup> crying out to God in supplication.

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Intention Setting (you can also use these as journal prompts):**

Which of these intentions might you incorporate into your practice today?

- Praising
- Witnessing
- Remembering
- Crying out for help

As you come to this practice, how do you begin?

- What is your intention? For today's movement practice and for this entire series?
- Can you create a breath prayer to guide you through your movement practice?  
For example: Inhale "I will..." & Exhale "praise (or witness, remember, cry out)."

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **1 Timothy 2:8**

Therefore, I encourage you to pray on every occasion with **hands lifted to God in worship** with a clean heart, free from frustration or strife. TPT

*Pray wherever you are. Reach your holy hands to heaven*—without rage or conflict—*completely open*. VCE

Stand with feet firmly planted and rooted into the ground. With feet firmly planted, bring your arms overhead, raising your hands in praise, witness, remembrance or crying out. Experience the feet ROOTED to the earth and the arms REACHING toward the heavens. Explore the “energy” created as you root to earth and reach to heaven at the same time.

**Exodus 9:29** – Moses replied, “When I have gone out of the city, I will **spread out my hands in prayer** to the Lord. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord’s.”

**Psalm 28:2** – Listen to my voice. You will hear me begging for Your help  
**With my hands lifted up in prayer**, my body turned toward Your holy home. VCE

*(Pause before moving on)*

**Ending Scripture Meditation: Psalm 63:1-4**

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than  
life, my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live;  
in your name I will lift up my hands. ESV

O God of my life, I’m lovesick for you  
in this weary wilderness.

I thirst with the deepest longings to love  
you more, with cravings in my heart that  
can’t be described.

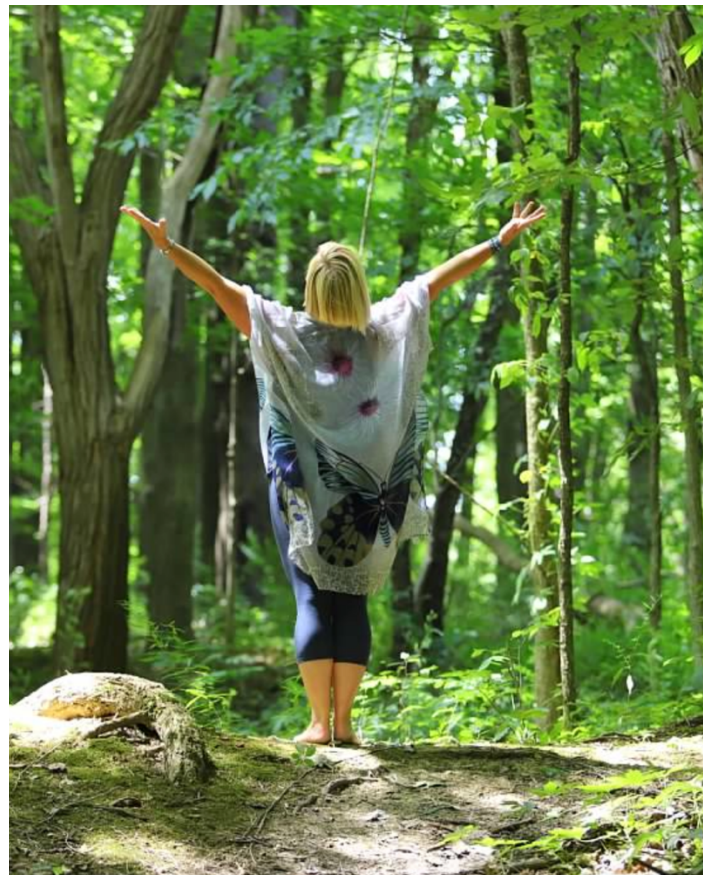
Such yearning grips my soul for you, my  
God! I’m energized every time I enter your  
heavenly sanctuary to seek more of your  
power and drink in more of your glory.

For your tender mercies mean more to me  
than life itself.

How I love and praise you, God!

Daily I will worship you passionately and  
with all my heart.

My arms will wave to you like banners of praise. TPT



## Postures of Prayer & Praise Practice 4: Hands Extended

### **We start with the breath**

Breathing in through the nose, exhale gently through your lips as if you are trying to move the flame of a candle without blowing it out. Continue to do this for several breath cycles.

### **Matthew 7:7-8**

Ask *and* keep on asking and it will be given to you; seek *and* keep on seeking and you will find; knock *and* keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives, and he who keeps on seeking finds, and to him who keeps on knocking, it will be opened. AMP

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Intention Setting (you can also use these as journal prompts):**

As you come to this practice, how do you begin?

- What is your intention? For today's movement practice and for this entire series?
- What are the blessings you have been given?
- What are the blessings you can give freely to others?
- Can you create a breath prayer to guide you through your movement practice?  
For example: Inhale "I receive..." & Exhale "So I can give"

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Hands Extended – Pleading & Receiving**

**Ezra 9:5-6** Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and **fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God and prayed:** "O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens."



Ezra is asking for (and receiving) grace and mercy from God. Verse 5a indicates that he is in mourning because of his sin. As we seek forgiveness, we receive forgiveness from God. Extending your arms towards heaven, with palms turned up and open before the Lord, you can fully expect to receive what God so lavishly pours out upon his people. Receive his grace, mercy and forgiveness. We can also receive from God by allowing others to be the hands and feet of Christ when we are in need.



## **Hands Extended – Giving/Blessing**

**Leviticus 9:22-23** – Then Aaron *lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them*.

And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down. Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they *blessed the people*; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.

As God gives to us, we give to others—we extend our hands to give to and to bless others. As Moses and Aaron blessed the people, the glory of the Lord appeared—as we bless others, we reveal the glory of God through the generosity of our actions. We are the hands and feet of Christ.

**Luke 24: 50-53** – When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, **he lifted up his hands and blessed them**. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.



As the resurrected Jesus ascended to heaven, where he was seated at the right hand of the Father to rule and reign over heaven and earth, he extended hands of blessings to his followers. This blessing brought them great joy—joy that kept them continually in the presence of God.

As we explore this posture, imagine someone you love or someone you have been interceding for in front of you. Extend your hands, as if they are right there with you and imagine placing your hands on their head. Offer a blessing over their lives. Pray for them. Praise God for them and all they mean to you. Now, as you go about your day, consider how you can reach out your hands to bless others in practical ways. Carry groceries for someone. Volunteer to serve a meal, paint a house, rake a yard, make someone a home-cooked meal. There are many ways you can use your hands to reach out and bless another person.

*(Pause before moving on)*

## **Ending Scripture Meditation: 1 Chron 29:10-13**

Blessed are you, GOD of Israel, our father from of old and forever. To you, O GOD, belong the greatness and the might, the glory, the victory, the majesty, the splendor. Yes! Everything in heaven, everything on earth; the kingdom all yours! You've raised yourself high over all. Riches and glory come from you, you are ruler over all; You hold strength and power in the palm of your hand to build up and strengthen all. And here we are, O God, our God, giving thanks to you, praising your splendid Name. MSG

## **Postures of Prayer & Praise Practice 5: Palms Down/Palms Up**

### **We start with the breath**

With hands palms down on your lap, think about what you want to let go of and with each exhalation imagine letting go of that burden. Then turning the palms face up, think about all the blessings God has given you and with every inhale, breathe in more and more blessing.

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Intention Setting (you can also use these as journal prompts):**

As you come to this practice, how do you begin?

- What is your intention? For today's movement practice and for this entire series?
- What are the burdens you carry? What would it feel like to let go of them?
- What are the blessings you have been given? How does it feel to carry those blessings?
- Can you create a breath prayer to guide you through your movement practice?  
For example: Inhale "I receive" & Exhale "I let go"

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Hands Down (& Up) – Surrendering (& Worshipping)**

**Psalms 141:2** – May my *prayer be set before* you like incense;  
may the *lifting up of my hands* be like the evening sacrifice.

**1 Peter 5:7** – Cast all your cares upon him because he cares for you.

**Hebrew 12:12-13** – So be made strong even in your weakness by **lifting up your tired hands in prayer and worship**. And strengthen your weak knees, for as you keep walking forward on God's paths all your stumbling ways will be divinely healed!

When someone offers us a gift, we open our palms and extend our hands to receive the gift they offer. We can't receive a gift with clenched hands—we must open our hands to receive. We also can't receive a gift if our hands are already full—we must let go of our burdens so our hands are empty to receive what God has for us. As we cast our cares, burdens and worries upon Jesus, we empty our hands so they are open to receive strength out of the glorious riches by the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 3:16).

Imagine kneeling before God—emptying your hands of your burdens. Find rest in the peace of his presence. You might want to begin with closed hands or even tightly clenched fists. Think of the things you hold onto with a tight grip—the things you fear letting go of.

As an act of surrender, open your hands and release these things to the Lord, trusting him to care for them, because he cares for you. Imagine laying these burdens down at his feet. Now imagine that sacrifice being burned and rising to the throne of God like incense.

Then rest with palms up and open, allowing your spirit to receive from his Holy Spirit. If you can, imagine Jesus placing gifts of grace, mercy and love into your open palms.

As we set down those things that God has asked us to give up, it frees our hands to lift them up again in worship—hands that are empty can be lifted in praise. Not worshipping because of what He's done, but simply because He is worthy of our praise. As we let go, we are free to worship without worldly hindrance. Lift your hands in worship once more.

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Ending Scripture Meditation: Psalm 134**

Come, bless GOD, all you servants of GOD!

You priests of GOD, posted to the nightwatch in GOD's shrine,

Lift your praising hands to the Holy Place, and bless GOD.

In turn, may GOD of Zion bless you—GOD who made heaven and earth! MSG

Praise the Eternal, all you who serve Him—

who *stand ready to serve* in the house of the Eternal through the night.

Lift up your hands toward His sanctuary and praise the Eternal.

May the Eternal grant you His blessing from Zion,

God, the weaver of heaven and earth. VCE



## Postures of Prayer & Praise Practice 6: Kneeling Before the Lord

### **We start with our breath**

Listen to *We Fall Down* by The Instrument & The Maker. As you listen breathe in on a count of 4 and out to a count of four. Once you settle, see if you can extend the breath, breathing in and out to a count of eight.

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Intention Setting (you can also use these as journal prompts):**

As you come to this practice, how do you begin?

- What does it look like to lay your prayers and praise at the feet of Jesus?
- Can you think back to a time of powerful praise in the presence of God? What was that like for you?
- What is your intention? For today's movement practice and for this entire series?
- Can you create a breath prayer to guide you through your movement practice?  
For example: Inhale "I will..." & Exhale "bow before my God."

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Kneeling – Bowing**

**1 Kings 18:42** – Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, **bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.**

This is a posture of great humility before God. In the passage above, Elijah is praying for rain in the midst of a drought. He is fervent in his prayers of intercession.

### **Psalm 95:6-7**

O come, let us worship and **bow down, let us kneel** before the LORD our Maker [in reverent praise and prayer]. For He is our God and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. AMP

**Come and kneel** before this Creator-God; **come and bow** before the mighty God, our majestic maker! For we are those he cares for, and he is the God we worship. TPT

Come, let us worship Him. **Everyone bow down; kneel** before the Eternal who made us. For He is our God and we are His people, *the flock* of His pasture, His sheep *protected and nurtured* by His hand. VCE

Take a posture of kneeling (using a blanket to cushion the knees if you'd like).

Seated option: lean forward and bow your head.

We kneel before the Lord God, our Creator. In reverence, we recognize his sovereignty over us, the children of God, HIS children. As we bow down in worship before God, we come under his care. We are his people, his beloved children. He watches over us as a shepherd watches over his sheep, not letting a single one fall away.

### **Matthew 18:12-14**

Jesus said, "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't wander away! In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish."

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Ending Scripture Meditation:**

#### **Psalms 138:1-3**

Thank you! Everything in me says

"Thank you!" Angels listen as I sing my thanks. **I kneel in worship** facing your holy temple and say it again: "Thank you!" Thank you for your love, thank you for your faithfulness; Most holy is your name, most holy is your Word. The moment I called out, you stepped in; you made my life large with strength. MSG

To You, *Lord*, I give my whole heart, *a heart filled with praise, for I am grateful;* before the gods, my heart sings praises to You *and You alone*.

**I bow before You**, looking to Your holy temple, and praise Your name, for Your unfailing love and Your truth; for You have placed Your name and Your word over all things *and all times*. On the day *I needed You*, I called, and You responded and infused my soul with strength. VCE

I thank you, Lord, and with all the passion of my heart I worship you in the presence of angels!

Heaven's mighty ones will hear my voice as I sing my loving praise to you.

**I bow down before your divine presence and bring you my deepest worship** as I experience your tender love and your living truth.

For your Word and the fame of your name have been magnified above all else!

At the very moment I called out to you, you answered me!

You strengthened me deep within my soul and breathed fresh courage into me. TPT





## Postures of Prayer & Praise Practice 7: Prostrate In His Presence

**Start with the breath.**

Inhale: More of Him

Exhale: Less of Me

### Prostrate – Submitting

**I Chronicles 29:20** – Then David said to the whole assembly, "Praise the LORD your God." So they all praised the LORD, the God of their fathers; they ***bowed low and fell prostrate*** before the LORD and the king.

*(Pause before moving on)*

**Intention Setting (you can also use these as journal prompts):**

As you come to this practice, how do you begin?

- Have you ever been on your face before God? Why or why not?
  - Is this posture of submission easy or difficult for you?
  - What is your intention? For today's movement practice and for this entire series?
  - Can you create a breath prayer to guide you through your movement practice?
- For example: Inhale "More of Him" & Exhale "Less of Me"

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Deuteronomy 9:16-21** VCE

**Moses to Israel:** How quickly you left the path the Eternal commanded you to stay on. Right before your eyes I took the two tablets, hurled them *onto the ground*, and smashed them to pieces. *I went back up the mountain*, and for another 40 days and nights I prostrated myself before Him, ***lying face down on the ground in grief and petition***, not eating or drinking anything *as before*. You had sinned so seriously—you did what the Eternal had just told you was wrong, and this made Him furious! I was afraid He was so violently angry with you that He'd destroy you, as He said He would. But one more time, the Eternal One listened to me, *and He spared you*.

As we worship, we recognize His holiness (and our unworthiness) and we bow low before a God who is worthy to be honored. In the Ancient Near East, a vassal treaty was a treaty between two kings – one more powerful than the other. The lesser king presented himself as a vassal (someone of a lower position of power) by bowing low before the more powerful king. To prostrate oneself before another is an act of worship, and the vassal treaty is the picture of worship the Israelites would picture in their minds when they worshiped Yahweh.

As you take a prone posture of prostration, take a moment to understand the “bigness” or transcendence of God in your mind first – his sovereignty and power. Lying prostrate before the Lord is often one of the most difficult postures of prayer to practice. And often, our pride keeps us from this position of humility. We must press through our pride in order to worship him fully. Yet there in that place, God will meet you in powerful ways.

Bow down low, prostrate yourself, before him as Lord with hands flat on the ground. In that place of submission, allow yourself to enter into the intimate care of God. Note: this posture can be done seated in a chair, laying the head on a table in front of you.

*(Pause before moving on)*

### **Ending Scripture Meditation:**

**I Kings 18:36-39** (the story of Elijah on Mt Carmel) – At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself.” Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! And when all the people saw it, they **fell face down [prostrate] on the ground** and cried out, “The LORD—he is God! Yes, the LORD is God!” NLT

All the people saw it happen and **fell on their faces in awed worship**, exclaiming, “God is the true God! God is the true God!” MSG

When everyone witnessed this *extraordinary power*, they all **put their faces to the ground in fear and awe and wonder**. And the people cried, “The Eternal One is the True God! The Eternal One is the True God!” VCE



## Other Postures of Embodied Prayer

In addition to the postures and hand positions above,  
the following are additional movements I find useful to communicate through movement

Prayer hands with community in circle – make prayer hands with your neighbors on either side of you in a circle. Now our thumbs no longer face our own hearts, but face towards the center of the circle, which represents community. If prayer hands at my heart are *my own* prayers, then prayer hands with my community *are our* communal prayers. Unified, unity, community, group prayer.

One hand on the heart and one on the belly (soul) – prayer of heart and soul; calming, centering

One hand to heart, one hand lifted high – I am yours. All that I am worships all of Who You Are.

Hands that reach, grab and pull in – seeking, reaching out for God, grasping to him, pulling him, a recognition of our great need for him. Lord, I want more of you.

“Rainfall hands” – hands that rain down God’s blessing.

“Splashing hands” – move as if you are standing (thigh-deep) in water and splashing Living Water up and on you. Infilling, refreshment, cleansing

Arms that extend and move across space (in a variety of heights and ways) – all the nations, all the earth, all gathered, extends what’s happening “in you” to others or the earth around you.

Hands that present (drawing hands from shoulders out towards others) – extend grace, mercy, love, welcoming, presenting, giving, serving.

Flat hands, palms down, as if smoothing out a tablecloth – setting an altar before the Lord, the Lord setting a table before us.

Hands that sweep up and pull down – bringing down God’s grace, mercy, love, etc. on ourselves or others.



“What makes body movement prayer is our intention, our desire that it be prayer, in relationship with the very large story of Holy Creation, of which we are a part, in the human dimension. We offer our selves, our souls and bodies to be receivers of and ‘language-makers’ for the Large Mystery that is living in us.”

~ Alexandra Caverly-Lowery in “The Body’s Voice in Spiritual Direction”



*I pray you enjoyed this exploration of embodied worship, prayer and praise. I would love for you to come and explore with me through my books or my offerings online or in person.*

*There are many resources if you'd like to explore more deeply:*

Online [Rooted & Reaching Christian Embodiment](#) course. [APPLY HERE](#) and receive a \$75 discount!!

[Jesus in My Practice: Bringing the Questions of Jesus to My Movement, My Meditation & My Mat](#) devotional book with space for journaling.

[O My Soul: Bringing the Psalmist's Cry to My Movement, My Meditation & My Mat](#) devotional book with space for journaling.

[Voices of Wisdom in the Body: a Christ-Centered & Bible-Based Exploration of Energy](#) – both a textbook and a workbook. Includes affirmations, body-based prayers and scripts.

*You can read about my retreats, workshops and trainings at [www.fullyembodied.com](http://www.fullyembodied.com).*

*Email me at [jodythomae@gmail.com](mailto:jodythomae@gmail.com) to be added to my Rooted & Reaching email list to receive information on retreats, trainings, workshops, resources, and our free online dance chapels.*

*Shalom, Jody*