

**Guidelines for
Leading Centering Prayer in a Group
Dayspring Retreat Center
November 2007**

The following guidelines may be modified as needed. They provide a general approach, one used in the group at Dayspring over the years.

(1) ***Ring gong once***

The focusing of attention and intention.

(2) ***Readings (a vestibule)***

Slowly and prayerfully read a short passage from a contemplative writer such as Thomas Keating, Cynthia Bourgeault or Thomas Merton or a poet such as Mary Oliver or David Whyte. This is followed by 8-10 seconds or so of silence, then slowly and prayerfully read a Psalm or part of one from Nan Merrill's "Psalms for Praying" or the Bible. For both readings shorter passages are preferred over longer ones.

(3) ***Ring gong 3 times***

Allow each ring to end before starting the next one. These rings signal the start of either a 20 or 30 minute period of Centering Prayer. Twenty minutes is used if a newcomer to the prayer is in attendance, otherwise, a 30 minute period is typical.

(4) ***Ring gong 3 times***

This signals the end of Centering Prayer after 20 or 30 minutes.

(5) ***Sharing***

Afterwards there is sharing out of the silence if a person so desires.