

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
SMALL GROUP SESSION  
**SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**  
By the Rev. Glenn H. Turner

**OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:**

“Many people have said that prayer, like meditation, begins with silence. True silence is a far different experience from just being quiet or not talking. In the inner silence of just being, it is easier to find Authentic Presence. In order to reach this kind of profound silence, we clear out the extraneous, the clutter, from our heads and our hearts as we attempt to connect with our innate Buddha-nature, our natural goodness - the center of our being.

C. S. Lewis once wrote, “The prayer preceding all prayers is ‘May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to.’” When someone is ill and you’re afraid, the real you - Authentic Presence - emerges. This is the true you speaking from the source within to the source of all blessings - Authentic Presence meets Divine Presence, Reunion.

So before we begin praying, we stop; we get silent. We become still. We get in touch with the divine within. Then with or without words, we unself-consciously speak what’s in our hearts. The authentic longing of the heart-spirit expresses itself. We listen. This is where real being comes in. Sometimes we pray silently. These can be our truest prayers.

Benedictine monk Brother David Steindl-Rast once said to me, ‘Real prayer begins when one is no longer conscious of praying.’”

- Lama Surya Das - “Awakening to the Sacred”

**MOMENTS OF SILENCE**

**CHECK IN:** (40 - 50 minutes)

What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, issues you are facing.

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted, if time remaining, general response and conversation is welcome. Confidentiality.

**FOCUS:** “Spiritual Discipline”

“In prayer, we come nearest to making a real clearance in the thicket of thought.”

-John O’Donohue

**Discussion:** Prayer, Meditation, Yoga, Tai Chi - there are many spiritual disciplines. What has been your practice?

**LIKES AND WISHES**

How did this session go for you? Is there anything you’d like to call particular attention to?

**CLOSING WORDS:**

“Go to a garden  
And just stand in it.  
Breathe in the air, the fragrances,  
the light, the temperature,  
the music of the different plants, insects, birds, worms,  
caterpillars, grasshoppers, and butterflies.

Inhale the prana (cosmic energy) of all these abundantly  
growing things.

Recharge your inner batteries.

This is the joy of natural meditation.