

Gathering Question: When are you most able to sense God's presence?
__alone in prayer __in prayer with others __in a worship service
__while walking or meditating __during routine activities __other
Why do you think you experience God more fully during those occasions?

Life in the Presence of God

The purpose of prayer is not simply to draw up one's requests and praises and present them to God in some acceptable fashion. It is not just discerning answers from God. The purpose of prayer is much deeper than that. Prayer is communion with the Father and Son through the Holy Spirit. It is a means of living an intense relationship with God.

It all begins with our personal view of God? How do you understand him? Is he aloof and above most of the concerns of your life, stooping down occasionally to be present during the important times? If that is true then a lot of New Testament passages are hard to understand in that light. He is not only the forgiver of our sins, he is our constant help and support in life. He is our friend (John 15:15).

But how does a person practice the presence of God? Brother Lawrence, a cook in a 17th Century French monastery, gave the world a phrase that well describes a deep friendship with Jesus. He talked about *practicing the presence of God*. As this humble Monk would wash dishes and serve food to his fellow servants, he communed with God, and the glow of the presence of God gave his seemingly menial tasks a richness and significance they had never before had. No matter where we might find ourselves, we can commune with God as we join in his work in this world.

From the arrival of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we have been aware that God is with us. One of his names, *Immanuel* means that very thing. God is with us! John explains the significance of his birth in his Gospel, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling place among us" (John 1:14). God actually came to live among his people. He was a man and he was real. God's presence was real.

When Jesus died and was resurrected and ascended into heaven, we were not left as orphans. Christ still lives in those who love him. He sent his Spirit to live in us so that we would never be without his presence. So every day, in so many ways, we can sense his presence in us. Christ is **in** us the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).

Read: John 15:1-8; I John 1:1-2

Reflect:

1. Why is remaining in Christ vital to our spiritual life and growth? What relationship do you see between prayer, remaining in Christ, and Christ remaining in us?
2. What are the contrasting results of remaining in Christ and rejecting him?