



## Presence

Growth Plan Guide  
Centennial Covenant Church

### What is presence?

“Presence is a physical, relational and spiritual engagement with your immediate circumstance. Taking all of who you are and keeping it right here with what’s going on in front of you. Removing yourself from the future and being right here in this moment.”

---Pastor Karl Helvig, Sermon on Presence April 25, 2021

“Men invent means and methods of coming at God's love, they learn rules and set up devices to remind them of that love, and it seems like a world of trouble to bring oneself into the consciousness of God's presence. Yet it might be so simple. Is it not quicker and easier just to do our common business wholly for the love of him?”

--Brother Lawrence, Maxims

### Scripture

Isaiah 6:8, Luke 8:45-46

### Related Character Qualities

Compassionate, Attentive, Humble, Gentle, Grateful

### Cognitive Learning Resources

*Note: Not all resources necessarily represent the views of Centennial Covenant Church nor are all resources listed always from a faith based tradition. The goal is to find the gems in the resource even if not all that is engaged is agreed upon by the reader.*

- [Sermon on Presence](#) by Pastor Karl Helvig at CCC.
- [The Listening Life: Embracing Attentiveness in a World of Distraction](#) by Adam McHugh
- [Practicing the Presence of God](#) by Brother Lawrence
- [The Attentive Life: Discerning God’s Presence in All Things](#) by Leighton Ford
- [The Way of the Heart: Connecting to God Through Prayer, Wisdom and Silence](#), by Henri Nouwen
- [The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World](#) by John Mark Comer. Or this [video](#) on the same topic by him.

### Practices That May Nurture Presence

Note: Please review The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook by Adele Calhoun to see if anything inspires you.

- In order to nurture the ability to be physically/relationally present with others and self, practice the Prayer of Examen.
- Practice taking thoughts captive; thoughts that are negative or destructive. You can do this by practicing breath prayer. Do this by “exhaling” a lie and “inhaling” a truth. For example exhale “I’m not good enough” and inhale “I am cherished by God.” See the [CCC Centered Podcast](#) for info on this prayer.
- Do a “distraction” survey. Pay attention to what keeps you from being attentive to God, to others, to important tasks, etc. Perhaps you can then “fast” from these things for a while.
- Take a day of solitude and silence in a way that is meaningful to you. Attend a guided retreat. If a day is too long start with small amounts of time.
- Pay attention to beauty by choosing a certain color on certain days. Look for things that are that color. Perhaps take pictures of them. You might be surprised what you notice.
- Practice the discipline of slowing (see The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook) as a way of paying attention to God and others. Look up to see the face of others as you walk through the grocery store.
- Practice deep listening to others. Avoid interjecting. Seek understanding and the communication of care. Look others in the eye.
- Practice paying attention towards those closest to you. Get on the floor and play with your kids or grandkids, nieces and nephews. Take someone to breakfast. Ask open-ended questions that show you are truly curious. Notice their talents and gifts and tell them.
- Choose an activity that will help you be present to God and self. Pick up the guitar you put down long ago. Make the bread you used to be good at making. Work on that mechanical task you love to engage with. Ask yourself what you used to love to do that you stopped doing. Now try doing it again.
- Ride a city bus as a way to pay attention to those made in the image of God.
- Walk in nature as a way to pay attention to nature that reflects God’s creativity.