

Spiritual Practice: Slowing

From *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*

- Before beginning a meeting, allow time for people to become present. Say something like, “I want to give you a moment of silence to leave behind what you are coming from. I want us to be present to each other in our discussion together. Take some deep breaths and relax. We will start in one minute.” If you are meeting with Christians, ask them to place in the Lord’s hands the things they are hurrying from. Then have them offer their next engagement to the Lord. Slowly and intentionally invite the entire group to be totally present to the moment, to each other and to the Lord. After you have deliberately attended to becoming present, it is time to begin.
- People who are rushed often feel anxious about their lives. So when you wake up, before your head leaves the pillow, offer God three central concerns of the day. Ask him to care for these things as you go about your daily tasks. When your worries creep in, return to the moment when you handed God your concerns.
- Enter into prayer in a leisurely way. Perhaps use “palms down, palms up”.
- Intentionally drive in the slow lane. Intentionally choose the longest line at the bank or grocery store. Intentionally sit longer over your meal. Intentionally chew your food. Intentionally take a longer shower. Relish the time. Be in the presence of God. What rises to the surface of your mind? What does this tell you about yourself?
- Insert margins of rest and relaxation into your day. Remembering that it is better to be unavailable than inattentive, build some buffer times into your life:
 - Shorter appointments
 - No back-to-back appointments without a break
 - Take some deep breaths before you pick up the phoneAsk God to make you present to the moment. When people ask, “So how are you?” refrain from a litany about how busy you are. This simply reinforces that a revved-up existence is what matters.
- Counter gut reactions that arise from feeling threatened or insecure by breathing slowly and deeply. Breathe in Christ’s presence. Breathe out your anxiety and fear. Breathe deeply several times before you speak and respond.
- Read slowly. Read for transformation rather than information. When a word stands out or lights up, stop. Let the word roll around in your heart. Do not read any more. Meditate on what you have read.