

# Introduction to Meditation

## Introduction

Meditation is a set of practices that help us train our mind. The goal of meditation is to be able to see reality clearly, as it really is, free from the colouration of our thoughts, feelings and emotions. The benefits of regular meditation practices are many, and include:

- Feeling more connected to the world you live in
- Reducing your stress and anxiety
- Understanding what drives you and the people around you
- Becoming less affected by negative emotions
- Being able to address difficult issues in your life

In this nine week course, you will be introduced to basic meditation practices, and learn how to apply these to your daily life.

There is no teaching of theology and there is no requirement to practice any particular religion, or any religion at all, to participate and benefit from this course. All are welcome.

We meet in St Barnabas Anglican Church, and we appreciate the ability to use this space for our practice. We also acknowledge the prior and continuing custodianship by the Jagera and Turbal people of the land where St Barnabas is built.

## About our approach to Meditation

The approach we will take in this course is based on ancient practices from Buddhism and from contemplative Christian traditions, especially the desert monastic and Carmelite traditions. The basic practices, such as practicing mindfulness, watching the breath and the approach to analytical meditation, come from northern (Tibetan) Buddhist schools, and the approach to contemplation on love later in the course is based on the teachings of St John of the Cross and St Teresa of Avila. This course has been developed based on the meditation experience and teaching received by the instructor over more than twenty years, and is not associated with any formal school of Christian meditation, such as the WCCM.

## Conditions of Participation

While there are no preconditions on participation in this course, we do require that all participants observe some basic rules. These will ensure the safety and enjoyment of all practitioners. If you don't feel you cannot commit to these rules, we ask that you excuse yourself from participation.

**Respect for others.** We need to respect the opinions and feelings of others, and refrain from conduct or saying things that could cause hurt, embarrassment or cause discomfort to others.

**Respect for the Space.** We are meeting in a consecrated space, significant to the members of the congregation of St Barnabas. We ask what you conduct yourself in a quiet and restrained manner. When you enter the space, please find a seat and sit quietly, and refrain from excessive conversations. Please also place your mobile phones on silent. We would ask that if you arrive after the start of the session or have to leave early, that you do this silently.

**Respect for the Teaching.** Each week the teachings will follow a set structure. Time will be allocated for questions and answers. Other than in these times, we ask that you listen, but do not interject. We find that if there is too much debate during the teaching sections, that people can not learn key aspects of the practices.

**Maintaining Safety.** We will maintain social distances at all times (1.5 m) and use the hand sanitizer before and after the teaching. If anyone is unwell or has reason to believe they may be infected with COVID19, we ask that you stay home. You agree to provide your contact details so we can contact you, if there is a requirement to contact trace. The church operates under a COVIDSafe industry plan.

The church has a commitment to providing a space that is safe from sexual and physical violence, abuse and discrimination. If you experience any of these things while at St Barnabas, please contact the protection officers of the parish, whose details you will find on the notice boards in the church entrance and in the hall.

## Session Structure

Each week the session structure will be the same.

6pm	Session opens with welcome and introduction to the session
6:05pm	Watching the breath
6:15pm	Teaching
6:30pm	Application of teaching
6:40pm	Reflection on the session
6:45pm	Session finishes

## Program

Week 1	How to watch the breath
Week 2	Mindfulness
Week 3	“With our thoughts we make the world”
Week 4	Developing your meditation practice
Week 5	Different types of meditation
Week 6	Love your enemy – developing Equanimity
Week 7	The Science of Happiness
Week 8	Open to Love
Week 9	Finding your path

