

A PATTERN OF DAILY MEDITATION

*Edited and compiled by
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*Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be,
nor be conceived without God.*

Spinoza, The Ethics, Chapter 1 Prop. 15

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This simple pattern of daily meditation is designed for use by any group of Christians inclined to be in sympathy with the thought and religious attitude of the philosopher Benedictus de Spinoza (1632–1677). Spinoza believed God was Nature and Nature was God (*Deus sive Natura* - the “sive” means “or” in the sense of equivalence) and that there is only God-or-Nature and its modes. Consequently, every apparently distinct ‘thing’, whether obviously animate or not, is, in truth, to be understood as a mode of God-or-Nature. In this service wherever you read the word God you should understand it also to mean Nature and vice versa.



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¶ *After gathering the service leader begins with the following words:*

We gather to open ourselves to the source of being to seek and speak the truth in love and comradeship.

May we be spared from the arrogance of telling others what they should believe, while having the courage and clarity to witness to our own faith. We seek an openness where each person is free to express their heartfelt beliefs or honest questions.

We long for a sense of oneness and peace despite our differences, and wish to be strengthened so that when we leave we will be better able to work for peace and justice in our world.

¶ *Then the service leader lights a candle with the following words:*

All things in the world are One, and One in all things. What is all in all things is God, and God is eternal, has not been created, and will never die. Divinity is present everywhere. Heaven and earth are filled with God but at certain places and at certain times we feel a specialty of presence. May this be such a place and such a time.

¶ *Silence.*

☪ *The service leader continues by reading the following three passages interspersed with time for silent reflection:*

Understand that nothing can be, nor be conceived without God and that whatever is, is in God. Therefore, we must love God with everything we have – our feelings, our intelligence and with all our physical and mental strength. The next most important rule is to love Nature as we love ourselves. These are the most important rules by which to live a life. Everything else said on this matter is simply a commentary upon them.

☪ *Silence*

With what attitude must we live in the presence of God and how do we acknowledge that we are not independent and apart from this Divine Unity? Our reason and experience tells us that we should simply try to do what is good, that is to say, to live and act justly, to love kindness and compassion, and to walk humbly through Nature.

☪ *Silence*

Mysterious but glorious universe of matter and spirit, of which each of us is but a tiny fragment.

May the goodness, which we trust is somehow at the heart of things, increasingly prevail over evil on earth, our common home.

May we learn to organise our life so that the necessities and worthwhile pleasures of human existence are more equally shared and be ready to make what sacrifices this requires from us.

May we be tolerant of others and love them, when we can, as we hope to be tolerated and sometimes even loved ourselves.

May we seek our own happiness in ways which help rather than hinder others in seeking theirs, and be happier ourselves for this; but let us not repine too much at our own inadequacies but make the best of ourselves as we are, neither envying nor despising others.

May humanity flourish without excessive exploitation of other species, and in a world in which we can still be refreshed by communion with the non-human.

And may we not fret too much about time, realising that everything is eternally there in its own particular place in the eternal consciousness of the universe. Amen.

☪ *Silence*

☪ *A reading (and, if desired, a short reflection upon it) followed by a further period of silence.*

☪ *A further period of led meditation on all or some of the following areas of concern:*

For Nature and all she contains

For family and friends

For our own local religious community

For our village, town or city

For our home country

*For the invisible & universal religious community that
[contains all people of goodwill]*

For ourselves

☪ *People may here light personal candles of joy and concern and speak prayerfully and briefly to them.*

☪ *Silence*

☪ *The service leader invites those present to say the following:*

O God, whose oneness includes and embraces all that has been made and has come to be ;

O God, in whom all things are present and who is present in all things ;

O God, in whom there is no division, a Divine Unity, and whose expression in humanity found focus and symbol for us in Jesus, our brother ;

Like him, may we come to know what it is to be fit expressions of your universal presence. Amen.

☪ *Conclude by saying together:*

May peace dwell within our hearts, and understanding in our minds; may courage steel our wills, and love of truth forever guide us. Amen.

☪ *End by resting in silence once more and conclude the service by extinguishing the candle.*

This service contains adapted material by Benedictus de Spinoza, John Toland, Clifford Martin Reed, Timothy Sprigge, Andrew Brown & Harvey Noordsy.