

This is my body ...

Begin by making yourself as comfortable as you can. It might be helpful to close your eyes as this can help you to connect internally through touch and sensation, without visual distractions.

We begin with some words from Psalm 139, grounding our whole in the greater whole which is God.

'O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.'

For indeed, we are woven in the depths of the earth. Every element that forms your substance ... every atom of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, calcium came from somewhere. Either you, or your mother, breathed it or ate it. It grew in the ground or walked upon the earth and before that, we are told, it came from beyond the stars, coalescing into solid matter over unimaginable eons of time.

Indeed, I am, fearfully and wonderfully made.

Take a moment to focus on your breathing. Take one hand and place it on your chest. Notice the rise and fall of your ribs. They rise, the chest expands, and the drop in internal pressure sucks air in from outside – life giving oxygen gifted from the skies. Within the lungs, in a matter of seconds, the air fills 300 million tiny air sacs, only 1 cell thick. The oxygen dissolves and passes across a membrane to enter the blood where it will be carried to every cell in your body.

And Life is in the breath, for which the Hebrew word is Ruach, which means both breath and Spirit. The Spirit of God which breathes through us and in us.

If your hand is in the centre of your chest then it is also over your heart. See if you can sense your heartbeat underneath. This is beating rhythm of your being. Your heart is a rhythmically contracting muscle, never tiring, never stopping, from birth to death. It pumps about 8000 litres of blood every single day, carrying it through a network of vessels which, laid end to end, would reach 60,000 miles - more than twice the circumference of the earth. Each vessel is full of blood – millions of cells, suspended in fluid.

And Life is in the blood, which carries oxygen and nutrients.
This is my body, this is my blood.

Take your hands and place them over your abdomen. Liver, pancreas, kidneys, intestines, each with their own form and function. There's 8 ½ metres of intestine in there, where does it all fit? Use your hands to sense the heat from your body, a by-product of the constant activity within, even while you rest. Can you feel it ... hidden movement, barely sensed? This morning's breakfast is still in motion.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Broken, chewed, swallowed, churned, dissolved, absorbed, in-corporated.

Take, eat. This is the bread of life.

This is my body.

Take your hands and place them on your head, one on each side. There is a gently beating rhythm here too, if your hands are sensitive enough. Sense the protective casing of your skull. And within, cushioned by fluid ... your brain. 100 billion nerve cells, electrically charged spark of life. Active, communicating, interacting, receiving, sensing, directing all that you do. Am I here? I am. Therefore ... I think?

Place your hands on the front of your thighs. The impulse of a nerve, directs an activity. An electrical pulse causes muscle to contract, shortening, pulling on tendon, connecting to living bone, moving a joint. Feel the bulk of the muscle under your palms. These are your quadriceps, a four part harmony, enabling you to stand and jump and dance. Push your feet slowly and firmly into the ground and feel the tone of your muscle change, ready for action.

Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live.

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Take a moment more in quiet then open your eyes.