

Good Afternoon Everybody, thank you so much for joining this Christian Meditation and Reflection session. I'm Amy Wright, I work in the retail department and also lead the Christian Network here at CBRE.

Meditation is an ancient practice which aims to bring us internal peace through resting in the knowledge that we cannot control everything in our lives, that worry is fruitless and for those with faith that there is a God who knows all the intricate details and has them in hand. We rest in the knowledge that there is a God who cares and is bigger than our fears, failures, worries and anxieties and longs to give us rest for our souls here in the living.

At this point I would just say that this will be a Christian based meditation, reflecting on teachings from the Bible as well as practicing breathing techniques. Everyone here is very welcome whether you are a follower of Jesus or not, or you have a faith or none. This is your time to relax, to rest and to connect with God if you want to. Please do as you feel comfortable, this time is for you and you alone.

Meditation is the art of stillness, and this takes practice. Everyone I'm sure can testify to being excellent at the art of busy-ness, but even on our busiest and most productive days we can still sometimes lack a sense of peace and contentment with the day. For me, meditation sounds like an impressive activity which very disciplined and calm people do. However, what I have realised is that it is something which everyone can do and perhaps even was made to do. For most people it takes time and practice and patience. And if we remember that meditation is the art of stilling ourselves and casting aside our burdens and worries from our minds then of course this may well take a lifetime of practice. Who has a day that doesn't at some point involve a worrying, concerning, pressurised, complex or stressful situation? Therefore the practice of stilling our minds against the stresses which eat away at our sense of peace is a daily practice.

We will start by making ourselves comfortable, and if you feel happy to please find a comfortable spot on a chair, on the floor, sitting or lying down. I will be sitting on the floor throughout. If you are happy to you can now close your eyes.

Please start by gently listening to your breathing, no need to control it, just listen to the breath in and out, in and out, feel your tummy expand and contract.

Now I would like you to take a long breath in and a long breath out. Do this until these longer breaths feel comfortable and natural. Keeping with these long breaths, once you have breathed out just count for 2 before breathing in again. Do this a few times and you may find that your breathing slows down. This technique tends to slow the heart rate down as it tells your body that you are in a relaxed state. As you continue to do this make sure that you continue to control the breath on the way in and out.

Now just let your breathing return to normal, natural and relaxed.

Jesus said come to me all you who are weary and burdened, you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest. We may think that we slept well last night and that perhaps we are rested or perhaps we didn't sleep well and a good restful sleep is

just what we need right now. However, I think Jesus was offering more than rest for our bodies, he was always interested in the wellbeing of our souls. So as we sit here just allow any thoughts which are pressing in and taking your attention, anything which is concerning you to hold in front of you in your minds eye for a moment and then let it gently rest on the floor and out of your immediate sight. If you feel able you can pray this silent prayer. Jesus, you say if I come to you with my cares and concerns, you will give me rest in return. I give you this concern of mine and ask that in return you would give me your rest.

We have a few minutes now to let these thoughts come to us and flow away.

There's a well known song or prayer written in the Bible by a man called David. He was a man who seemed to manage to stay very much connected to his own heart and to God whilst facing the reality of his challenging circumstances. He explains the secret to his connection in the following words:

*I set the Lord before me always, He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters, He refreshes my soul.*

Take a few moments to imagine yourself in that open field, can you hear the river next to you. Perhaps you can smell the grass. Maybe you can see birds overhead. Relax there, you may find that other thoughts keep coming to mind, don't worry about that. Stillness and rest takes practice. Just let the thoughts come, and if you are able to, give them your attention for a few moments and then let them pass by.

If you are still feeling restful in that open field just notice how you feel. Maybe a little more peaceful and a little more connected to your feelings.

Lillies of the field and birds of the air – are they not provided for, therefore do not worry.

Last thought, think of one thing that you are grateful for today. Just one thing, and enjoy being grateful for that thing.