



Beatitudes & Yoga

INCORPERATING THE BEATITUDES INTO YOGA

- by Dr. Donna Jagielski

Examining the Beatitudes through the lens of a sequence of yoga poses can be a powerful means for creating a transformational practice. Coupling each Beatitude with supplemental Scripture that supports the overall theme can strengthen the sequence even more by emphasizing the practical Christian application within the yoga practice.

Since the majority of our time is off the mat and outside of the church, it is fruitful for us to be cognizant of how we live out our yoga practice and Christian faith. Practicing yoga on the mat is easy. Following Christian practices when attending Sunday service is easy. It is only when our patience is tested, when our faith is tested, does our true practice emerge.



First, regarding the Beatitudes and the sequential flow of the poses, you may decide to follow the Beatitudes in their sequential order or go through the Beatitudes in an order that best suits the yoga flow itself.

Either way, you will create an impactful practice by combining the Beatitudes, with their practical applications to life, with the most complimentary yoga pose(s) for each one.

This type of sequential practice will also help to reinforce remembrance of the Beatitudes by internalizing them into a physical practice.

As Benjamin Franklin realized, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn."

Second, remember your breath. Including breathwork in the Beatitudes, sequence connects your breath to your soul. My invitation to you is to increase the length of each breath by adding one count to the breath before you reach 8 counts.

Beginning with one, inhale for one count and exhale for one count. Repeat this adding one count to each breath until you reach a final breath of eight counts. Using this approach you are invited to focus on each one of the Beatitudes with each inhale/exhale of your breath.

Also, by using this breathing technique, you will be relaxing your body and mind, slowing down the system, thus moving from the sympathetic to parasympathetic nervous system response.

Finally, as an alternative, and one you might invite your students to consider, is to center your attention upon one particular Beatitude as the focused prayer or "mantra" as it is often referred to within yoga.

This focal Beatitude will guide the overall practice. This also creates a sacred unity and customizes your practice. It seals your practice. Think about it as feeding your soul.

There is a buffet of various Beatitudes before you. Select the one you need the most, in the present moment to feed your soul.

