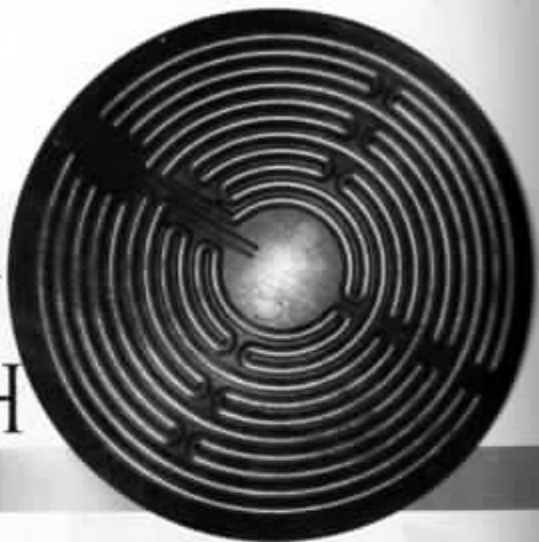


# PRAYING THE LABYRINTH

Jill K H Geoffrion



“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

Labyrinth prayer is a walking prayer that quiets the mind and spirit so that you can listen more easily and connect more deeply to God. Walking the labyrinth takes time—20 to 30 minutes. It is worth it!

Suggested steps for a labyrinth walk:

1. Before you begin, decide what you are going to pray for. Focus.
2. Stand still at the entrance and invite God to walk with you.
3. Move on the path as you pray. There is only one path that leads to the center. Go at any pace (fast or slow) that seems normal. Notice what is happening around you and make it part of your prayer. If you get turned around, you will either end up in the center or at the entrance/exit, continue your prayer from there.
4. When you get to the center, rest in Christ’s loving presence. Reflect on what has happened so far on your prayer walk.
5. When you are ready, take the same pathway back out. You may wish to continue the prayer that has started, or pray about how to integrate what God has been showing you into your life and service of others.
6. When you reach the threshold, thank God for this whatever has happened during your prayer experience.
7. Afterwards, take time to reflect on what happened while you prayed. Write down your thoughts and feelings, or creatively express them in another way (drawing, etc.).

Suggestions: On the way to the center pray for the needs of others. In the center, rest with God. On the way out, pray for your own needs.

Or, As you walk, repeat a Bible verse as a prayer: “Thy will be done...”

Or, Begin with a question, “God, what is my next step?” and pray with the question as you move on the labyrinth.

### If You Haven't Experienced A Labyrinth Before

"If you want to know God better, take a walk with God." Four-year-old Asa  
The labyrinth is easy to use. Here's all that you need to know:

- ❖ There is just one path that leads to and from the center in a labyrinth. You cross the threshold, follow the path in to the center, enjoy your experience there for as long as you like, and take the same path back out across the threshold. (This is not a maze—there are no dead ends in a labyrinth, only turning points that lead one closer to the center.)
- ❖ Feel free to walk around other people if their pace is different or if they stop. It's okay for other people to move around you. If you feel "tippy" or dizzy, it may be helpful to slow down, speed up, or focus on a point in the distance. Some find it helpful to stop at each turn. The path can be a two-way street. Do what comes naturally when you meet someone else, just as you would if you were walking on a narrow sidewalk.
- ❖ Take advantage of this opportunity to pray with your whole body. Give yourself permission to follow the intuitions and desires that come. Be open to your body expressing itself through gestures, movements, or the flow of tears. Don't be trapped by the thought, "I can't do *that*, other people are watching!" Other people are busy with their own labyrinth experiences.
- ❖ You can't get lost on a labyrinth, but you can get turned around. If you move off the path and forget which way you were heading when you step back on, you will either end up at the threshold or the center. From there you can decide to continue or end your experience.
- ❖ Many have experienced the labyrinth as a mirror where it is possible to view one's life internally and externally at the same time. Open your heart; open your mind to what you may notice. Be compassionate with yourself; judging yourself isn't helpful!
- ❖ Labyrinth experiences are seldom "done" when one leaves the path. You may wish to journal, walk around the labyrinth, use art supplies to explore the meanings of your time on the labyrinth, or sit quietly to let what has begun continue to grow. You may not become aware of all the meanings of your labyrinth encounter for hours, days or even months!
- ❖ Witnessing others as they move in prayer can be a very meaningful way of readying yourself for your prayer on a labyrinth. One of the many gifts the labyrinth offers us is a place to practice watching others with eyes of prayer rather than eyes of judgment.
- ❖ Before you enter, let go of any expectations about what may happen during your labyrinth experience. Pay attention to whatever develops as you move in prayer. Try to let go of thoughts that distract you from being present to the experience.
- ❖ It is often helpful to respond to your labyrinth experience by writing, drawing, or using some other creative process.

People of faith have been walking this prayer path for centuries. Now it is your turn...□



MYANMAR INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY

# မြန်မာနိုင်ငံဓမ္မတက္ကသိုလ်

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Journeying together  
towards the fullness of life

Deut. 8:3-8; John 10:10; Eph. 4:12-13

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