

# From Pastor Marissa Becklin

## Reflections While Running

My life has been filled with different spiritual practices during different seasons. I've gone through seasons of journaling in the morning as a form of prayer, of nighttime meditation, of reading a devotion in the morning, of reading a spiritual poem each day. Perhaps you have one kind of spiritual practice that makes you feel close to God that you engage in relatively regularly, that you've been doing for a while. If so, wonderful! If that is not you, that's okay, too. Sometimes we need different things in different seasons; don't be afraid to try out a new kind of prayer, a new way of spending time with God each day.

In June of this year I started my own new spiritual practice: running. Now, I was a runner in middle and high school, and in college, but never longer than around three (3) miles. I used to run with headphones in my ears, music on full volume, intended to distract me from the experience of running itself. My goal was to trick myself into going a little bit farther, ignoring the exertion that it took. In that way, it was a very disembodied practice.

I took a long break from running (around 5 years), but in June of this year I found myself longing for a way to spend time outside and to get some quality time with God. Running was the answer to that longing, but now it looks much different than it did before. Now when I run I listen to a book, not trying to distract myself, but rather occupying my mind while I pay attention to how my body feels as I move. I don't try to ignore what is happening—I look around, notice my surroundings, notice how I feel. I pray as I run, trusting God to help me endure and find patience with myself. I have made the goal of running a half marathon on November 13, because running has become an opportunity to learn what I am capable of with God's help. As I learn to run farther and longer than I ever have before, I rejoice that God journeys with each of us, making us capable of more than any of us could ever imagine.

Prayer isn't just something we use our minds for; it involves our bodies, too. When we pray we might bow our heads, close our eyes, fold our hands, kneel, stand, or sit. We can pray while on the move, or while still. God is with us everywhere we go, in all that we do, and has given us the gift of these bodies we have. Our bodies are more than just a shell for a soul—they are sacred, even in all of their imperfections. Jesus' crucified body was holy, and your body is holy, too.

I invite you to pay attention to the role that your blessed, imperfect body might play in your prayer life this month. Notice how God is present with you as you take each breath, as you wake, as you sleep. I pray that you learn something new about yourself and God.

*In God's peace, Pastor Marissa*