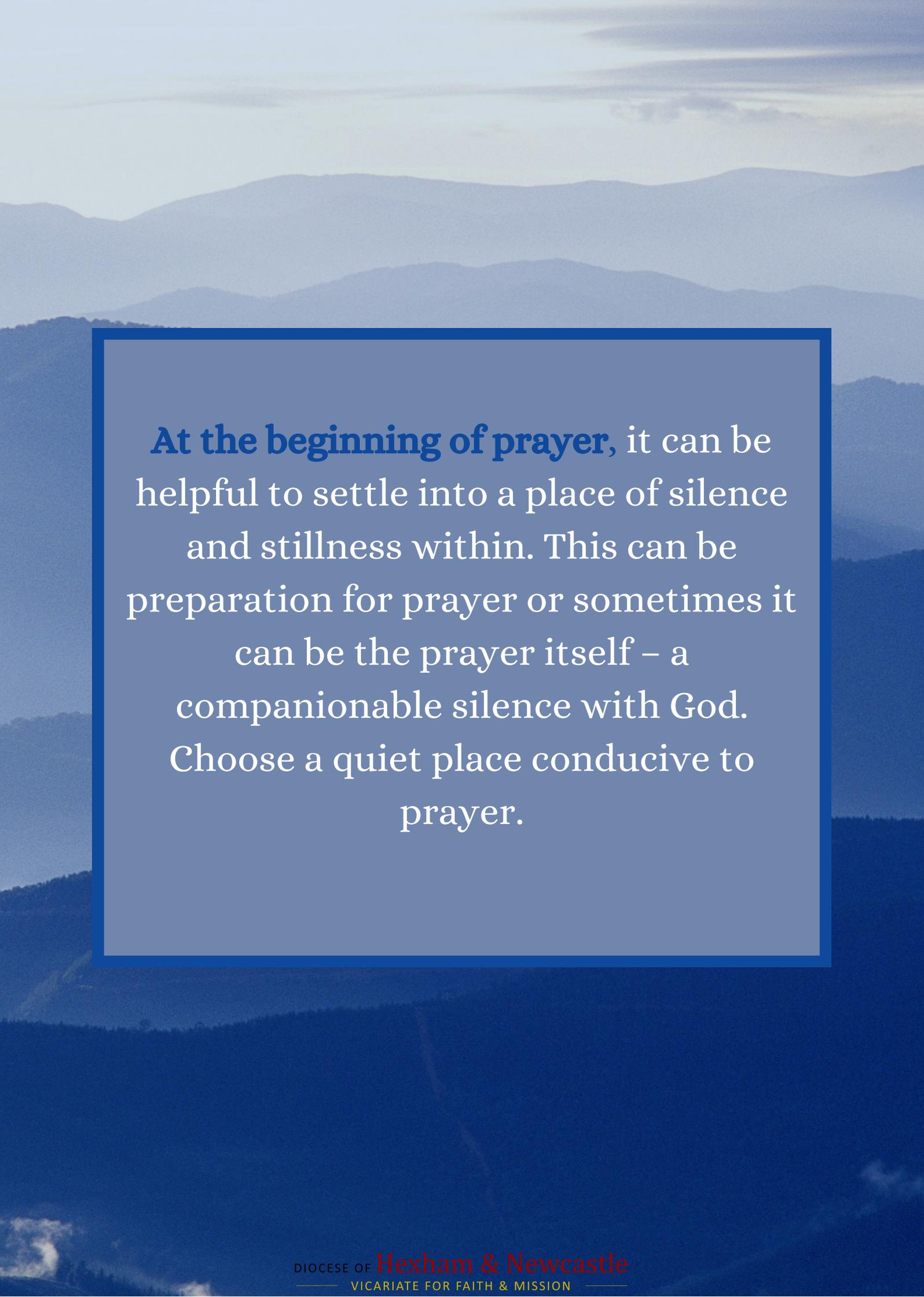


Ways into Silence and Stillness

**And after the fire came a gentle
whisper.**

**When Elijah heard it, he pulled
his cloak over his face
and went out and stood at the
mouth of the cave.**

(1 Kings 19:12-13).



At the beginning of prayer, it can be helpful to settle into a place of silence and stillness within. This can be preparation for prayer or sometimes it can be the prayer itself – a companionable silence with God. Choose a quiet place conducive to prayer.

Awareness of the body

Sit in a relaxed, comfortable position – feet on the floor side by side, hand resting in the lap.

Close your eyes.

Allow a feeling of relaxation to flow through you.

Start at the top of your head.

Let any tension ease away. Be aware of the relaxation flowing down the rest of the body – face – neck – shoulders – chest – stomach – legs – feet.

At each point, tense up muscles and then let them relax.

Notice where any knots of tension are. Let them go. All the while breathe gently – letting go and letting God be God.

Be aware of the very centre of yourself, the still point, and rest there quietly.

Awareness of sounds

Again, start in a relaxed position.

Begin to identify any sounds you can hear outside the room.

Don't rush – don't strain.

Focus for a moment or two on each sound.

Without trying to block them out – let them be!

Move your attention inwards to any sounds within the room.

For a few moments let your attention be on these sounds.

Again, without blocking them out, take another step inwards and be aware of the “noise” within yourself. It may be physical – like the sound of breathing – or may be a rush of thoughts and feeling passing through your heart and mind.

Acknowledge them – let them go.

Finally, one step further inwards let your attention come to rest in some quiet, still place in the centre of yourself. Rest there in the quiet for as long as seems good to you.

Awareness of breathing

Sit in a relaxed position and slowly become aware of your breathing. Notice the pattern but don't try to change it. Not if it's deep or shallow, regular or irregular. You may want to simply rest in the quietness. Or you may want to let your breathing-in express all you long for and your breathing-out be a surrender of yourself and all your worries, anxieties, pain.

Breathe in God's peace – breathe out any worries...

Breathe in God's love – breathe out any anxieties...

Breathe in God's care – breathe out any concerns...

Be still

“Be still and know that I am God”.

Awareness of all the senses

Sometimes it can be helpful to have objects around you to help you into silence and stillness.

Sight – It may be helpful to gaze at a candle – icon – picture – statue – flower – or...

Touch – Some find it helpful to hold a stone – a cross – something tactile.

Sound – Listen to some quiet reflective music – or the sound of waves – or...

Smell – Have an incense stick burning – or oil burner – or flowers – or...

These can be relaxing exercises,
attentive preparations for prayer or,
in themselves, a still prayer of
presence, listening, waiting or
silence.

Do what suits you.

Pray as you can – not as you can't.

Let God be God.