



The Thriving Rhythms Project...

...challenges us to move with thoughtful purpose toward a deepened sense of identity—that we are spirited, creative, and connected people, called to be present, grateful, generous, and missional with our lives. We're exploring what it means to intentionally live into this particular series of life rhythms, which help us bring some good to each moment, something better to each day, and our best to each other as we encounter the world around us.

We are ... Present

As image bearers of the Divine, we are called to be fully present and mindful human beings. We thrive in the present as people who practice sabbath rituals by seeking margin, welcoming silence, pausing to listen, acknowledging liminal space, and being immersed in what each moment has to teach.

WELCOME | CHECK-IN |

CENTERING | PRESENT Thriving |

Frederick Buechner challenges us with powerful words of invitation in his book, *Now and Then: A Memoir of Vocation*. Reflect on these words and then describe a pivotal moment in your life when being in that moment brought you a deeper awareness, a broader understanding, and a more expansive view of yourself, God, or another person.

"Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery it is. In the boredom and pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because, in the last analysis, all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace."



ANCIENT WISDOM – Luke 10:38-41 [The Message Bible]

As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand." The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course and won't be taken from her."

STORY | *Hineini Happens*

The ancient biblical word "*Hineini*" is made up of two Hebrew words, "*Hee-Nay*" which means "Here," and "*Nee*" which means "I am." Combined, these two Hebrew words translate, "*Here, I am.*" Here's a little hint: the comma, well, that's really important.

The roots of "*Hineini*" are found early on in the book of Genesis. In chapter 22, verse 1, when God calls out to Abraham, Abraham responds by saying, *Hineini*, "*Here I am!*" But Abraham wasn't simply referring to a place on a map. He wasn't giving God some geographical coordinates. And it's not like God didn't know where Abraham was. Instead, when Abraham said *Hineini*, "*Here I am!*" he gave voice to something far more significant by announcing his readiness for what was to come. Essentially, Abraham was saying, "*Here, in this moment, I am. I am ready to do whatever you say.*"

Further into the narrative from Exodus 3, Moses hears a voice calling out to him from a burning bush: "Moses, Moses," and he immediately answers: "*Hineini, Here I am!*" More than just a matter of geography, and in the same way as Abraham, Moses gives voice to his readiness for what's to come in that one moment, that one place and time. In effect, Moses is saying, "*Here, in this moment, I am; I am ready to hear what you say.*" (Exodus 3:4). Isaiah receives his prophetic calling in a vision in which God says: "*Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?*" *Isaiah cries out: "Hineini! Send me!"* Another statement of readiness and willingness. Isaiah is giving voice to his willingness, and readiness for what's to come. In effect, Isaiah was saying, "*Here, in this moment, I am; I am ready to go.*" (Isaiah 6:8).

"*Hineini*" is about offering ourselves, presenting ourselves so that God can create aliveness in us and bring aliveness through us to the world. "*Hineini*" is about being present in the present moment. "*Hineini*" is about saying "*Here I am,*" but not simply in the sense of letting the person who is calling your name know where you are in space and time. There is, in this remarkable word, a deeper sense of being where you are spiritually. In this sense, then, "*Hineini*" is about identity. "*Hineini*" – "Here. I am." Here—in this place, at this moment, right here, right now, is where I am most fully and completely me. "*Hineini*" – "*Here. I am.*" I am present and fully ready to begin, here, in this place, fully present, in this moment. "Here. I am." Here, in this moment is where I am most fully and completely who I am."

This is a bold statement that the people of God used in moments of significant change or fear or wonder about whatever was coming next. This is a powerful word for people facing transition;

those who are asking what it means to be fully present on the edge of or in the midst of change. In this moment there is the potential for transformation. In those moments of life when you're overwhelmed by the beauty, the power, the wind, and tide of the moment; in the current of the moment, and you have no other words to use, you can say, "*Hineini! Here, in this moment, I am!*" In those moments of life when you're sliding down the metaphorical freeway at 52 miles an hour and another



vehicle is literally coming over the top of you, and there is glass everywhere and sparks are coming from the friction between your car door and the pavement, and you have no other words to use, you can say, "*Hineini! Here, in this moment, I am!*" In those moments of life when you're watching the breath of your loved one rise up into the air around you and all of the air is being sucked out of your lungs from sheer exhaustion, grief and relief and that deep, deep sense of loss collides with an even deeper sense of gratitude, and you have no other words to use, you can say, "*Hineini! Here, in this moment, I am!*" In those moments of life when you don't know where the future is taking you, and there is ambiguity on the left and on the right, and you've got doubts and apprehensions, and you're experiencing pain and weariness, and you're filled with fear and loneliness, and you've got critics, and you've got financial stuff going on, and you have no other words to use, you can say, "*Hineini! Here, in this moment, I am!*"

"Hineini!" Here, in this moment, I am! "Hineini!" I am here! I am who I am, and I am who I'm becoming; right here and now in this moment; and I am ready!" It's like a jolt, like a reminder not to fall asleep in all of this because this is your life and it's the best moment of your life simply because you have it! And all of a sudden you realize that your own heart is still beating, you're in sync, the sacred rhythm that's been beating in you from the very beginning is still beating in you right now, and you know that you can face your future, your ambiguity, your doubts and apprehensions, pain and weariness, fear, and loneliness, you can all of that as you say "Hineini, here I am!"

Present CONVERSATION

- On a scale of 1-10, how present are you in this current moment? For those whose answer isn't 10, what is keeping you from being fully present right now? In general, what keeps you from being present in your daily life?
- Are you more of a Mary or a Martha? Share a story to support your answer. How can we "hang on every word [Jesus] says" in today's world?
- Share about a time when you had somebody's complete attention and felt both heard and understood.

- When were you able to answer a calling with "*Hineini*?" Who called and what was the calling? When did you miss a calling or opportunity because you were not "ready to go?"
- *We thrive in the present as people who acknowledge thin space. [A thin space is a location or moment in which our sense of the Sacred is more pronounced, where the space between the transcendent and the commonplace is exceptionally narrow.]* Is there a particular place you go to experience thin space? If so, share about it. If you've ever experienced a powerful moment of thin space, share about that. Have you ever stumbled upon thin space unexpectedly in the midst of an otherwise ordinary place and time? Share about that experience.
- *We thrive in the present as people who immerse in what each moment has to teach.* Share about a moment in your life that taught you something vitally important. Share about a moment in your life TODAY that taught you something. How about a moment in the last hour? Are you able to recognize teachable moments as they happen or only in retrospect?
- As a group, brainstorm a list of practical ways to thrive as a present person. Share and celebrate the ways you are currently thriving as present people. What is one idea you can take away from this conversation to help you grow as a present person?

A PRESENT MANIFESTO

We believe being present is a gift that creates healthy, generative spaces for people to thrive. We believe that being mindful of each present moment invites a deeper awareness of the benefits of seeking margin, welcoming silence, pursuing the art of listening, anticipating liminal space, and immersing in what each moment has to teach.

MANTRA

"*Hineini*" – "Here. I am." Here, in this place, at this moment, right here, right now, I am most fully and completely Who God has created me to be.

INTENTION

Gracious God, help us embody your presence in each moment as reflections of your divine image. May we find peace and renewal in Sabbath rest, welcoming silence, listening, and learning. Guide us to create space for margin in the midst of life's busyness and noise. Teach us to pause, listen, and be present in liminal spaces where transformation awaits. May we immerse ourselves fully in each moment embracing its teachings and revelations. Grant us the mindfulness to thrive in the present as mindful stewards of your creation. Amen.

BLESSING

As a child of God, may you discover what it means to thrive as a Child of God in each present moment. May you find "life, and more life" as you live into the sabbath rhythms by seeking margin, welcoming silence, pursuing the art of listening, anticipating thin space, and immersing in what each moment has to teach.