

*The
Order
of the
Daughters
of the King*



Fall Assembly

Saturday, October 23, 2010

9:30am - 3:00pm

at St. Paul's Monongahela

The Rev. Jay Slocum
Jonah's Call
4729 Ellsworth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-977-7751
jslocum411@gmail.com

Reflection One: Praying With Our Minds

Lectio Divina and Praying Through Scripture

A. Reflection on Mary: Women of Thought

B. Lectio Divina

This method of praying Scripture dates back to Christians living in the 4th century. It can be used in a congregation, in private, and with large groups.

Step One: Reading (Lectio)

Praying Scripture first involves placing God's Word on our lips by reading a passage out loud. Gently read a selection from the Bible and when a thought, line, or word stands out and captures your attention, stop there and spend some time focusing on that portion of the passage. Then carefully repeat it out loud until it "dries up." This first step is very simple. It is nothing more than verbally focusing on a biblical thought- like placing the Word of God as food in the mouth. To help with praying Scripture, pick a biblical passage that naturally leads to reflective prayer; The Psalms (1, 19, 23, 29, 34, 56, 139) and John's epistles (1,2, 3 John) are a good place to start.

Step Two: Meditation (Meditatio)

Once the word of God is on our lips and in our mouths, we then begin to bite and chew it or meditate on it. Just as chewing extracts the greatest amount of taste from food, so does meditation extract the most from the meaning of the text you are praying through. Every word of Scripture is intended by God to feed us Spiritually. While meditating, quietly reflect on the passage and listen for what God has to say- listen for the word or phrase that seems to strike you in a unique way and begin to think about that word, line or thought in silence for an extended period of time. Please allow enough time for God to speak to you through this Scripture. And, remember that meditating on God's Word is not a science. Sometimes you get answers and other times you get questions.

Step Three: Speaking (Oratio)

There are two aspects to the speaking element of lectio. The first is prayer: Ask God, "Why this word? What are you saying to me today?" Talk to God and let Him speak to you. The second aspect, when done in a group, is to speak what God has revealed to you to the group—this makes the truth real and adds a level of accountability. With praying Scripture, the idea is to allow the Word of God to move from the lips to the mind and then into the heart. Speaking (Oratio) to God through prayer is the response of the heart to the Word of God. Praying the Scripture can lead to:

- Praise and Adoration: Thanking God for his love, goodness, mercy, forgiveness, blessings as a result of praying through a Scripture passage.
- Petition: Asking God for his help with any area of life (struggle, relationships, unmet needs, etc.) as a result of praying through Scripture.
- Conversation and Questioning: Speaking to God on an intimate level as you would anyone you trust and love as a result of praying through Scripture.
- Conviction: Realization of shortcomings and convictions that result from praying through Scripture.
- Repentance: Asking God for forgiveness for a realized sin (broken relationships with God and others, moral failures, things done and left undone) as a result of praying through Scripture.

Step Four: Contemplating (Contemplatio)

The fourth element is contemplation. The goal of contemplation is to get to a place where we can see ourselves being loved by God and loving Him in return. Clearly, we are speaking of pure gift (Grace) at this point. These moments can be fleeting or prolonged, subtle, or pronounced. They can go and come again. This final step is similar to being lost in conversation with someone you truly love- "walls" have come down, hurts have been healed, new depths of understanding are realized, and your relationship is renewed as a result of praying through Scripture with the Lord.

C. Personal Reflection: *Lectio Divina*

Reflection Two: Praying With Our Hearts

Listening Prayer and Encountering God

A. Reflection on Hannah: Women of Encounter

B. Listening Prayer

1. Stop in order to listen

God desires for us to be intimate with Him. If we are going to go deeper in our walk with Him, then we need to develop that intimacy. And true intimacy with God requires more than just speaking to Him—it involves listening to Him as well. Listening prayer requires us to stop and to be quiet for a few moments. Our prayer lives are sometimes a lot like a mountain stream; they can go on and on but they have little depth. Streams that run down mountain canyons are shallow even though they are very active. The water just keeps moving over the rocks and out of the canyon. Listening prayer is the act of slowing down and then stopping. Instead of talking and moving, we stop and listen. Listening prayer is like a dam built across a mountain canyon. The water is stopped temporarily and becomes deep. It holds back the active experiences of our prayer lives and allows us to gain some depth and to hear God. The importance of listening prayer is not in having the “right” prayers to pray, but in stopping for a long enough time in your day that you can hear the words of the God who loves you beyond measure.

2. What is Listening Prayer?

It is a form of prayer that takes seriously the God of the Bible who has always desired to communicate with His chosen people. Listening prayer acknowledges that God desires to communicate with His people, even more than we desire to communicate with Him! He is the same God who spoke in the Bible, and He continues to speak to us if only we have ears to hear.

3. How can I practice listening prayer?

a. Be still before Him. Lamentations 3:25,26,28 says, “The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently... Let him sit alone and be silent.” In this posture of stillness, we can more keenly hear Him speak. We honor God by expressing our willingness to be still in His presence.

b. Cease from asking for a moment.

We may find it difficult and uncomfortable at first to relinquish our needs-oriented approach to prayer. But, just seeking to be in God’s company, awaiting His Presence can be a powerful, calming, and holy experience. When you practice listening prayer, do not ask for anything. Instead, allow Him to express His love and joy over you.

c. If total stillness is difficult, try the following exercises.

- After closing your eyes and stilling your body, think on a name of Jesus:
- Meditate on this name as you slowly speak it to yourself, reflecting upon all that it means; for example: Bread of Life, Good Shepherd, Master, Light of the World, the Vine, the Door, the Resurrection and the Life, Alpha and Omega.
- Meditate on the names of God: Deliverer, Rock, Strong Tower, Jehovah-Jireh (Provider), Jehovah-Rapha (the Lord Who Heals), I AM, Abba.
- Reflect on events of the week, or something you are reading. Just recall these events or ideas (rather than trying to analyze them) and ask God to speak to you about these events or ideas. In our fast-paced world, we often miss what God is saying to us in the events of our lives. If you find that you are “racing” and cannot have total silence, perhaps God can speak to you by helping you to process and give meaning to last week’s business.

Do not be discouraged if you do not hear anything dramatic from God during a time of listening prayer. God often wants us to sit in stillness at His feet and learn to be content in His presence. Just doing this can sometimes take a good amount of time and is a valuable part of our relationship with the Father.

C. Personal Reflection: Listening Prayer?

Reflection Three: Praying With Our Hands

Prayer Journaling for Active Saints

A. Reflection on Martha: Women of Practical Concerns

B. The Practice of Prayer Journaling

1. What is it?

Prayer Journaling is a special quiet time where you turn a blank page into a special time of worship with the Lord. It is not a diary or a book of prayers that others have prayed. Rather, Prayer Journaling is recording your own prayers with God from your heart.

2. What are the Benefits of Prayer Journaling? Prayer Journaling is especially attractive to active folks who can be easily distracted during prayer times or who simply find it easier to connect with God through writing. Additionally, Prayer Journaling is also an effective tool to assist you in keeping up with the blessings of God in your life. We tend to forget past blessings because of our busy schedules. Prayer Journaling will keep fresh the memories of God's answers to your prayers.

3. How to Begin? There are many ways to journal your prayers. The most important thing is that you begin to do it. Prayer Journals come in all shapes and sizes. One of the best ways is to get a plain spiral notebook and just begin writing your

- Praises, Confessions, Thanksgivings, and Supplications to God.
- Insights into the scriptures as you study the Word of God.
- Use a personal computers to journal prayers.
- One helpful method for Prayer Journaling is "Stop, Sit and Stay" until you have connected with God. There's no magic amount of time to be able to do this. Some days it's very quick and other days the Lord may want you to slow down and work through an issue, revelation, etc.
- If you're just starting out in prayer journaling, it may take a while to recognize God's voice when He speaks to you. Don't get discouraged, but persevere. You're not just writing for the sake of writing- you're writing because you desire to connect with God. And the longer you do it, the more you'll come to realize that the most important time of the day is the time you spend with the Lord.

3. Practical Tips on Prayer

- a. Invocation - call upon the name of God. "Dear Lord visit this time." "Come Lord Jesus."
- b. Examine your heart, repent of sin that the Lord reveals to you, and confess them
- c. After asking the Lord to forgive sin, accept the Lord's forgiveness
- d. Give praise and worship to God; perhaps play some worship music on a CD or tape
- e. Thank God for answers to prayer and blessings in your life
- f. Lift personal petitions to God.
- g. Intercede for others and be specific in what you are asking
- h. Conclude your prayers "in Jesus' name," Amen
- i. Be persistent until you see answers to your prayers or sense your praying is completed.

4. Common Sense Ideas About When to Pray?

- a. Develop and establish a daily habit or rule of prayer
- b. Pray when you sense the Lord calling you to pray
- c. Pray when you are filled with anxiety or worry
- d. Pray when you are battling temptation
- e. Pray when you face decisions
- f. Pray when the Lord brings someone into your thoughts
- g. Pray when you sense danger
- h. Pray when you face major challenges
- i. If you are a morning person, take time in the morning
- j. Pray without ceasing

5. Prayer Journaling?