

Spiritual Practice | *De-Centering Prayer*

I don't know if you've ever heard of a "centering" prayer before – *maybe you've even tried one* – but this morning we're going to practice something together called a "De-Centering Prayer." The idea of a de-centering prayer is to challenge us to remove ourselves from the centre of our own lives, through prayer. If that seems a little abstract, think of it this way:

If your life were a movie you **would be** the main character, right? I mean, you're in every scene, you have most of the lines. It's *your* life as a movie. But the life Jesus calls us to is a life devoted to *worshipping God* and *loving our neighbours*. It's about re-casting Jesus as the main character in the story of our lives, giving God top billing on the marquee that hangs over everything we do. And "loving our neighbour" is all about putting the focus of our energy and attention on *others*, reimagining ourselves as simply part of the supporting cast.

So, for the next few moments, I want to invite you to get comfortable wherever you are. If it helps, close your eyes, and just allow yourself to be guided by my voice.

I want you to recall a memory – call it a *scene* – from this past week. Choose one that stands out as having been important for some reason, and that included at least one other person, even if only virtually. Now, in your mind's eye, I want you to go back and visualize that scene, and think about the other person who was in it. What were they feeling – *do you know*? What were they saying – *do you remember*? How did your presence there, impact them? (This can be hard to do, so I'm going to give you a moment to think about it.)

[Pause for 30 seconds]

Now, go back to that same scene and ask yourself: to what degree was God featured in that experience? Did God get any screen time? Were you aware of God's presence? Or do you imagine God in the audience? Laughing? Cheering? Do you imagine him playing the role of a critic? How did God experience this scene?

[Pause for 20 seconds]

Now stay in the moment a little longer and ask yourself: how this scene might've gone differently if God and the other "characters" in the story had gotten top attention, in your heart and mind, instead of you? What would it have looked like to turn the volume up on their words, tune into their thoughts, feature their feelings, and put the spotlight on their experience? Would things have gone differently? What might this have looked like?

[Pause for 20 seconds]

As we continue to learn how to de-center ourselves, I encourage you to spend time this week thinking of ways to reposition yourself as a supporting cast member; first and foremost to God's leading role in your life, and secondly to the people you encounter in your day-to-day. For example, you could:

- **Set a repeating alarm and pray “*Not my will, but Yours be done*” throughout your day.**
- **Try to go through an entire day without using the words “I”, “me” or “my.”**
- **Do a task you feel is beneath you.**
- **Anonymously send a gift, leave a note of encouragement, or drop off a meal.**

We'll have a bunch more ideas like that in our weekly Spiritual Practices resource, which you can engage in throughout the week; but for right now I'm going to throw it over to Erica to lead us in a de-centering prayer together:

Jesus, help me to de-center myself
Let my world revolve around You and those You love
Let Your will be done; and my will be laid aside
Let Your kingdom come; and let my kingdom go
May You lead; while I follow
Let others rise, while I remain still
Let others go first, as I learn to wait
Let others gain, as I learn sacrifice

I reject privilege and pride
Repent of self-importance
And remove myself from the centre of the story
To be repositioned as You see fit
Reassigned as the servant of all

Amplify the voices of others
And teach me to listen
Let the achievements of others be celebrated
And teach me to remain anonymous
Let others be honoured
Teach me to serve, in love

Amen