

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” – James 1:22

DAILY SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Monday – Daily Spiritual Practice: Breathing into Your Week

Anyone remember the 1986 song “Manic Monday”? It talked about the rush and chaos of returning to the workweek routine... running late, making excuses, never quite feeling on top of the list of things to do... anyone relate...?

Many times returning to work, school or any weekday routine after a weekend can feel jarring - regardless of whether that routine is something we dread or genuinely enjoy. This week, let’s start off with a breath prayer; calming and focussing our thoughts and committing the days and responsibilities ahead to God.

What is it you most need to receive as you go into this week?

Break it down to one word: clarity, calm, peace, presence, boldness, wisdom - whatever suits your situation. Identify your word of *request*.

What is it you most need to release as you go into this week?

Break it down to one word: stress, anxiety, confusion, insecurity, conflict - whatever suits your situation. Identify your word of release.

We’re going to do 3 breaths in total - you can always do more if time allows.

Start by finding a quiet place...

~ breathe in deeply, over a count of 3... praying your word of request as you do - breathe it in!

~ hold it for a count of 3...

~ exhale evenly over a count of 3... praying your word of release as you do - let it go!

~ pause for a count of 3 and start again.

Close your eyes and focus on feeling your breath (and request) enter your body, fill your body and exit (be released from) your body.

Repeat for 3 breath cycles total - again, you can always do more if you have time.

This is the perfect practice to repeat through the day/week as you need - it’s a simple, brief and effective way to refocus your heart.

Tuesday – Daily Spiritual Practice: POSTURE: Ready to Give and Receive

Our physical posture while we pray can affect how we participate in our prayer. Like an object lesson, it can ‘show’ us our prayer, adding depth of meaning to even simple prayers.

We invite you to hold your hands together in front of you, slightly cupped, as if waiting for someone to pour into them.

As you look at them, imagine actual items that have been poured into your hands in the past. Cool water to splash on your face on a hot day... a steaming bowl of soup... a beach treasure being shared by a child? Now consider what refreshing, nourishing, surprising things God has poured into your life.

Next, imagine the actual things your cupped hands may have offered to others. A mound of popcorn at the movie theatre... a baby bird returned to its nest... a cup of coffee.

Now consider what fun, life-giving, relational things God has positioned you to offer to others.

Give thanks for the good gifts - physical and spiritual you have received and offered.

Wednesday – Daily Spiritual Practice: WORSHIP WEDNESDAY

Today we invite you into a space of worship. Let the words of this song become your own.



Thursday – Daily Spiritual Practice: SOAP - Looking for God in Scripture

Scripture:

Psalm 121

[1](#) I lift up my eyes to the mountains—

where does my help come from?

2My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

3He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;

4indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

5The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

6the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

7The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;

8the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

Read the passage over slowly, prayerfully and attentively a few times. As you do, allow God to highlight a word, phrase or verse – something that jumps out at you personally.

Observations: Think about what is being said, by who, and why they might be saying it the way they are. What is the surrounding context? What other background information do you have? How and where do you see the heart of Jesus in this? Don't make conclusions or applications yet, just observe everything you can.

Application: Now consider how this passage might apply personally to your life. In what way does it speak to your own circumstances? How can it help you? How does it challenge you? How does it call you to love both God and others better? How does this word from God apply directly to your day-to-day life and how you are learning to follow Jesus?

Prayer: Now that you've read and reflected on God's word and begun the process of application to your life, simply talk to God about it all. Share what's swirling in your head and heart, allow space to listen for what the Holy Spirit is wanting to say to you in return as well.

Friday – Daily Spiritual Practice: EXAMEN - Looking for God in Life

The Prayer of Examen is a classic spiritual practice the church has been engaging in for hundreds of years. It's an exercise meant to attune us more sensitively to the activity and presence of God in and around us – knowing that the busy demands and general noise of our lives tend to drown out that natural awareness.

Examen is a practice of looking backwards and re-examining where God **was** at work, in the hopes that it will train us to more readily spot and cooperate with where God **is** at work in our present moments. Which is 100% a learned – and learnable – skill!

We began this week breathing in a request from God and breathing out something we released to God. Now that we've made it to Friday we invite you to engage this classic discipline. Where did you feel God presence? When were you aware of God moving in your activities? When were you aware of God speaking through you or to you in your relationships? How did God respond to your request and release from Monday? How do your answers to these questions make you relate to God in this moment? How do you think this might affect how you will relate to God in the future?