

Into the Deep

Introduction, Why Pray?

1. What is your personal experience of prayer?
2. What is your reaction to Burke's statement, "I don't pray because I am holy; I pray because I am not." How have you thought of prayer in the past? Does this change your perspective?
3. On page 6 and 7 there is a list of benefits of prayer written by Johannes de Caulibus. Pick one item you would like to work on these next 4 weeks as we go through this book.

Your Desire for God, God's Desire for You

1. "Prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours," What is Burke talking about here?
2. What are main obstacles you have in your day that keep you from a relationship with God in prayer?

Discovery Prayer (Lectio Divina)

1. What are ways that you can carve out "sacred time" to spend in prayer?
2. Have you ever tried praying with scripture? How was the experience for you?
3. We will close using the steps we learned today for Discovery Prayer reading through Matthew 14:22-33

Extras: Check out this video explaining Discovery Prayer aka Lectio Divina! <https://youtu.be/gKYE0c3ik9k>

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Essential Elements for Progress in Prayer

1. Burke states that we learn from the successes of others. As we grow in the apprenticeship of prayer, do you have a particular individual you look up to in the spiritual life? Or a particular Saint that you connect with? Share what qualities they have that you admire.
2. How do you plan to set aside Sacred Time, a Sacred Space, and Sacred Attention this week? (Next week we will touch base on this again!)
3. “Unlike non-Christian meditation that seek to empty the mind... authentic Christian prayer always seeks to fill the mind with God...” (page 31). What does this difference between emptying and filling look like practically?

Making a Solemn Commitment to God

1. “Those who are most successful at reaching their goals ensure that those goals are realistic, clear, concrete, specific, and time bound,” (page 36). Take time this week to write a commitment to God in your own words, and if you are able and in good health, stop into the Church to pray your commitment using the guide on pages 36-39. The Church doors are open Mon—Fri 8am—8pm at both sites, Sat and Sun from 9-noon at Christ King, and Sat noon—4pm at Saint Bernard’s.
2. Close together in Discovery Prayer over the passage from Mark 10:46-52

Extras: In this section Burke speaks about posture in prayer. How does posture apply to the prayer of the Mass?

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Step-By-Step Into the Presence of God

1. How did setting aside Sacred Time, a Sacred Space, and Sacred Attention this week? If it did not go so hot, do not get discouraged! Today is a new day to begin again. The Lord does not focus on how often we fall, but rather, on how often we stand back up.
2. Why is there an emphasis on prayer with the Gospels? Why do we desire to know Scripture at all? (If you are wrestling with this question, I highly recommend the book, "The Case for Jesus," by Brant Pitre)
3. What method of reading the Gospels do you find you like best? Reading the Sunday readings, going through one book from start to finish, or something else?
4. What does it mean to place yourself in the Gospel scene?
5. What step of Discovery Prayer do you find most challenging? Why?

Winning the Battle of Prayer

1. What tips and tricks do you use to battle distractions in prayer aka get the monkeys out of your head?
2. Burke speaks about "Transforming your Monkeys" through the sacraments. How do the sacraments assist your relationship with God? (**This is specifically a time for dialogue in the group regarding questions of the sacraments for any Catholics or non-Catholics. We can go over any questions next week / provide follow-up!)
3. Close in Discovery Prayer over Luke 11:5-13

Extras: Continue your prayer time this week, but dive a little deeper using the guide on pages 56-57

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Experiencing God in Prayer

In this chapter, Burke gives 4 different stories of people seeking prayer. As our last connect group, we would love to hear some of these same questions from you and see how we can continue to encourage you in prayer.

1. What motivated you to join this Connect Group?
2. Has the commitment to daily prayer been a struggle?
3. How has prayer impacted your life?
4. Can you relay an experience that might help others to understand how God has met you in prayer?
5. What has been the greatest surprise to you in practicing this prayer?
6. What is the most encouraging or delightful aspect to prayer?

Be Scrappy

1. What attributes of a “scrappy” person do you desire to increase in and ask for in prayer? (positivity, resourcefulness, trust, having a long view, resilience, consistency, and humility)
2. We have to fight for our prayer lives if we desire to grow closer to God. How will you continue to fight in the battle and keep yourself accountable? Through forming a small group? Having a trusted friend who can encourage you in the spiritual life?
3. Close in Discovery Prayer over John 3:1-21