

“Lost and Found: The Parables of Luke 15 and 16”

Lenten Prayer Journey

know that God has something to say, and if all we do are we going to hear the voice of God?

The emphasis of this Prayer Journey is to listen together. The greatest gifts we have as a congregation is our togetherness. Together we make up the living body of Christ. Together we are the church. Together we can and will hear the voice of God. Through prayerfully listening to one another, as together we pray and study the Scriptures, we can and will discern God’s dreams.

What we will be doing together

Listening to God through Scripture

Each week within this booklet there is one suggested passage. You are encouraged to pray over during the entire week. You will notice that this is different than using a devotionary. There are no paragraphs offered, telling you what to think or be hearing within this text. Day after day you are invited to ask the Lord what you might hear within this text. If a word or phrase grabs your attention. Notice what they say and how they tug at your heart again and again. In what way is God speaking through this text to speak to you? Remember, God is doing the speaking. We are the ones who are on this prayer journey with you. Don’t worry about whether you are “doing it right” or not. Let the Spirit guide you. Listen to the Spirit. Listen to the Spirit.

At the back of this booklet there is an article that you

week are for you. Use them to help you connect your stories and experience with the text. Let them guide your prayers.

Listening to God through worship

Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.” Through worship we offer our thanks and praise to God as a community united by Christ. As such, worship is a powerful opportunity to hear God speaking to us through the sacraments, the hymns, the proclamation of the Word, the sharing of the Peace, etc. During the Lenten season, Zion offers at least three unique worship opportunities each week, helping us to listen to God through worship: Sunday morning worship and Thursday evening worship at Northland Village, Sunday Evening Service of Reflection, and Wednesday morning and evening Midweek Lenten worship. Please try to worship as often as possible during Lent, using it as an important part of our listening to God together as a congregation.

Listening to God through discussion

Every week three opportunities will be offered to gather with others who are taking this same prayer journey. These gatherings are specifically designed to help us listen to God through one another. Listening and asking questions for clarification will be our primary tasks. Gatherings will be offered on Thursdays evenings after worship at Northland Village, Wednesday mornings during the midweek Lenten worship service, and on Sunday mornings following worship. The Soup Supper worship

- + What is God drawing your attention to through this experience?
- + When have you been that lost sheep?
- + When have you been a part of the ninety-nine?
- + When have you been the shepherd?
- + When have you been one of the friends or neighbors invited to celebrate the finding of a lost sheep?

Supporting Texts:

- Psalm 23
- John 10:1-18

The Lost Coin

March 17 - 23

Bible Text: Luke 15:8-10

Prayer Questions:

- + What is God drawing your attention to through this experience?
- + What is the most valuable thing you have ever lost?
- + How do you react when you lose something?
- + How do you celebrate when you find that thing that you lost?
- + What is the most valuable thing you have ever found?
- + How do you react when a friend or neighbor loses or finds something of great worth?

- + What is God drawing to your attention through this text?
- + When have you been the younger son?
- + When have you been the father?
- + When have you been the citizen who gave a hand to someone in need?
- + When have you been the slaves of the father?
- + When have you had a great awakening and what was it like?
- + How have you been welcomed back?

Supporting Text:
Jonah 1 & 2

- + What is God drawing to your attention through this
- + When has your back been up against the wall?
- + When has someone befriended you by adjusting a d
- + When have you befriended someone by adjusting th
- you?
- + How Jesus adjusted the debt you have with God?

Supporting Texts:
Philippians 2:1-11
Romans 5:8-10

The Lost Older Son

March 31 – April 6

Bible Text: Luke 15:25-32

Personal Prayer Questions:

- + What is God drawing to your attention through this text?
- + When have you been the older son?
- + When have you been the father?
- + When have you been the slave?
- + When have you been a part of the party?
- + In what ways do you forget that you are always with the Father?

The Rich Man and Lazarus

April 14-20 (Holy Week)

Bible Text: Luke 16:19-31

Prayer Questions:

- + What is God drawing to your attention through this
- + When have you been the rich man?
- + When have you been Lazarus?
- + What does it feel like to be found and brought home
- + How do you ignore the poor?
- + How have you cared for the poor?
- + Why do you care for the poor?

Christians use in their daily *lectio divina* one of the readings from the Eucharistic liturgy for the day; others prefer to slowly work through a particular book of the Bible. It makes no difference which text is chosen, as long as one has no set goal of “covering” a certain amount of text: the amount of text “covered” is in God’s hands, not yours.

PLACE YOURSELF in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become silent. Some Christians focus for a few moments on their breathing; other have a beloved “prayer word” or “prayer phrase” they gently recite in order to become interiorly silent. For some the practice known as “centering prayer” makes a good, brief introduction to *lectio divina*. Use whatever method is best for you and allow yourself to enjoy silence for a few moments.

THEN TURN to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the “still, small voice” of a word or phrase that somehow says, “I am for you today.” Do not expect lightening or ecstasies. In *lectio divina* God is teaching us to listen to Him, to seek Him in silence. He does not reach out and grab us; rather, He softly, gently invites us ever more deeply into His presence.

NEXT TAKE the word or phrase into yourself. Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories and ideas. Do not be afraid of

giving you as a means of blessing, of transforming your memories, which your pondering on His word has given to God what you have found within your heart.

FINALLY, SIMPLY rest in God's embrace. And when you return to your pondering of His word or to dialogue with Him, do so. Learn to use words when they are helpful, and to let go of words when they no longer are. Rejoice in the knowledge that God is with you in both silence, in spiritual activity and inner receptivity.

SOMETIMES IN *lectio divina* one will return to the printed text, either to savor the literary context of a phrase that God has given, or to seek a new word to ponder. At other times only a single word or phrase is set aside for *lectio divina*. It is not necessary to anxiously assess the quality of one's *lectio divina* as “performing” or seeking some goal: *lectio divina* is other than that of being in the presence of God by Scriptures.

<http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>

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