

Busy Person's Retreat – Participant Handout

Praying with Scripture

God Speaks to us First

God is concerned for us long before we know ourselves and become concerned for ourselves. God makes it possible for us to pray by placing within us the longing for God and giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

God speaks to us continually:

- through Jesus Christ, the Word-made-flesh
- through the Church, the Christian community, the people God has put in our lives
- through visible creation, God's self-communication in the physical world around us
- through the events and experiences of our lives
- through Holy Scripture, which is the main communication we use in our prayer

God invites us to Listen

Listening to God involves making the necessary commitment, preparing well for this important time, and paying attention to what God is saying in the Word and inside yourself. Find a place where you can be quiet and alone, quiet your inner self, ask God for the blessing of the Holy Spirit, and be at peace. Don't worry about distractions; if your mind wanders, just return to the Scripture and to your prayer. Thoughts and feelings about people and events may arise because of your prayer, and they are part of your prayer. Continue talking about them with God.

Open the Bible with a sense of God's presence, find the chosen Scripture passage, read it, then read it again, very slowly ... entering into the scene, talking with Jesus, listening to what God is saying, listening to your own heart and what the Spirit within you is saying. Pause whenever you hear God speaking to you directly, whenever you experience God's love, when you are moved to peace or joy, or when you feel disturbed or struggling. Don't be in a hurry; give the Word and experience the time they need.

And don't be discouraged if nothing seems to be happening. God is still present as the Spirit works silently within you, painting the image of Jesus on the canvas of your soul. At the end of your time of prayer, recall what God or Jesus has said to you, speak to God as Loving Creator, to Jesus as Brother/ Friend, and speak your prayers of petition and thanksgiving. You may want to write the highlights of your prayer in a journal after the period of prayer.

Seven “P’s” for Listening to God

- ❖ Prepare a Scripture passage ahead of time and have it marked ready.
- ❖ Choose a place where you are alone, quiet and free in God's presence. The same time and place each day are best.
- ❖ Find a relaxed and peaceful posture, a harmony of body and spirit.
- ❖ Be aware of the Presence of God. Respond to it and call upon the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Read the Passage once, then re-read it s-1-o-w-1-y and attentively.
- ❖ **Pause.** Take your time, don't be anxious, don't worry about reading a certain "amount", don't try to figure out the message ... but listen, pause, and let God speak. Be attentive to your heart ... and let the conversation with God be free and relaxed ...
- ❖ Pray honestly, using your own words. At the end of the half-hour, speak words of thanks and petition in a personal and loving manner to God, then jot down important words or experiences from your prayer in a prayer journal.