

DISCIPLE



FIVE: UPWARD

[HE MUST INCREASE, I MUST DECREASE]

FIVE: UPWARD

[He must increase, I must decrease]

HOST SHEET

If faith is the “trustful surrender” of my life to Christ, then we must adopt the values, virtues, and actions of Christ, both outwards to our neighbor and upwards to our Father. This is the session where we discuss the Upward Kingdom Priorities of the human heart. We do so by looking at the Top Ten Priorities that will aid us in developing a truly Christian prayer life.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Bring your Bible to this session. You will need to read Matthew 6:5-15, *On Prayer* in the *Sermon on the Mount*

Talking Points: Upward

Jesus frequently prayer alone: “And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone” (Matthew 14:23)

He encouraged us to be alone in prayer: But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matt 6:6)

He told us to pray directly without many phrase and superstitious words: Matthew 6:7-8

Most importantly, he taught us the heart of Christian intimacy in prayer: we are united to our Father in the Son Jesus Christ.

QUOTE: Catechism of the Catholic Church

2610 Just as Jesus prays to the Father and gives thanks before receiving his gifts, so he teaches us filial boldness: “Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will.” Such is the power of prayer and of faith that does not doubt: “all things are possible to him who believes.” Jesus is as saddened by the “lack of faith” of his own neighbors and the “little faith” of his own disciples as he is struck with admiration at the great faith of the Roman centurion and the Canaanite woman.

2611 The prayer of faith consists not only in saying “Lord, Lord,” but in disposing the heart to do the will of the Father. Jesus calls his disciples to bring into their prayer this concern for cooperating with the divine plan.

2612 In Jesus “the Kingdom of God is at hand.” He calls his hearers to conversion and faith, but also to watchfulness. In prayer the disciple keeps watch, attentive to Him Who Is and Him Who Comes, in memory of his first coming in the lowliness of the flesh, and in the hope of his second coming in glory. In communion with their Master, the disciples’ prayer is a battle; only by keeping watch in prayer can one avoid falling into temptation.

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session sheet

Introduction

- Welcome guests as they enter your home
- Serve drinks (and/or food) at this time
- Fellowship Question: What is the most important answer to a prayer you've received?

Talk

Lead a short prayer

Read the passage from Matthew 6:5-15, On Christian Prayer

Turn on the Video: *UPWARD* [He must increase, I must decrease]

Discussion

1. Which of the 10 stood out to you the most? Why?
2. Would you say that you have "Prayer Life"? Are you in the crawl, walk or run stage? Where would you like to be?
3. Entitlement is a term thrown around a lot today. What is it and why is it dangerous to our prayer life?
4. What is the hardest part of prayer for you? is it the consistency? Boredom? Distraction? Skepticism? How can the Gospel—the death and resurrection of Jesus— help you overcome these issues?
5. Consistency in prayer is the foundation of a prayer life. What time can you be consistent to and how can we support you and hold you accountable to this?

Conclusion

1. Read Aloud: Philippians 4:5-7
2. Assign everyone a prayer partner and have every commit to praying for one another that week. (This is our form of "one anothering one another" in prayer)
3. Close with an Our Father, which is the prayer of the Kingdom.

Lectio Divina: the Art of Praying With Scripture

Reading: taking a simple passage from the Bible and repeating it several times until something stands out to you, usually a couple of words or just one word. This is not study, but a form of listening through reading. Your attitude needs to be, “I’m not here to rush this. I’m just here to listen to God’s Word.” If something stands out to you, great. If not, pick something of worth and move on to the Meditation stage of Lectio Divina.

Meditation: This word or phrase is reflected upon within the context of your own life. You “chew” on the word for a while, asking questions like, “What significance does this word have about my life?” and “How does this word explain or emphasize something in my prayer life as a whole?”

Prayer: After you are done meditating, turn to give God a specific prayer as the fruit of your meditation. You just spent time in God’s Word, now you speak to God what it meant to you and offer your petitions to Him if it applies. “Lord God, you revealed to me some areas of laziness. Please give me more perseverance in my daily life.” If you are journaling, write down this prayer.

Contemplation: In the end, we stop with the activity and turn to silence, stillness and solitude in God’s holy presence. Contemplation in the Lectio Divina is all about calm and stillness. You are no longer trying to accomplish something from God and instead just want to be with God. Call to mind frequently that you are already in His presence.

Upward Kingdom Priorities of Christian Prayer

“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” – The Little Flower, Saint Therese

As Catholics we were often not taught how to pray, but only how to repeat. The External, Memorized and Recited can feel robotic and forced, but that isn't what prayer is supposed to be. Let's challenge ourselves to deeper prayer by reforming how and why we pray.

1. Be patient with yourself (crawl, walk, run)
2. Turn your attention to God at consistent times
3. Communal prayer means more than liturgy
4. Liturgical worship is not religious entertainment
5. Praise and adoration of God is the highest form of prayer
6. Frequently thank God
7. Meditate on Scripture often
8. Write down reflections, thoughts, and questions
9. Intercession is every Christian's task
10. When we petition, accept Yes and No with gratitude