

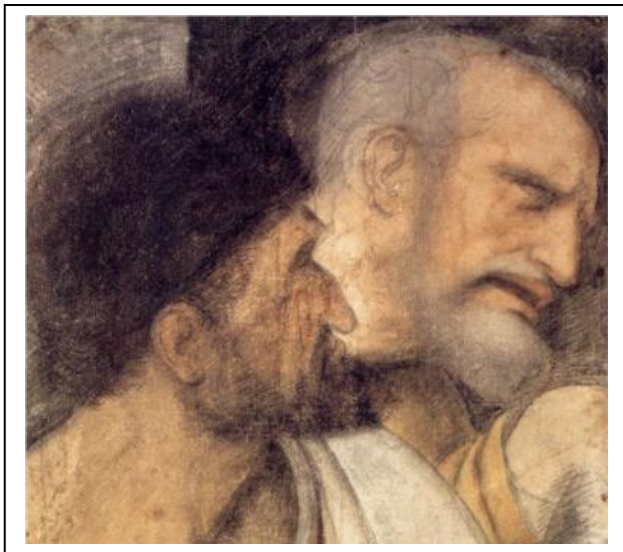
# Making Space for God

**Invocation:** O God, early in the morning I cry to you. Help me to pray and to concentrate my thoughts on you; I cannot do this alone. In me there is darkness, but with you there is light; I am lonely, but you do not leave me; I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help; I am restless but with you there is peace. In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience; I do not understand your ways, but you know the way for me... Restore me to liberty, and enable me to live now that I may answer before you and before men. Lord, whatever this day may bring, your name be praised. Amen

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Germany/1906-1945)*

**Looking to the Past-** Take some times to settle yourself. Invite the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts for the day. Think back over where you have been this last month. Review your journal. What burdens, emotions, and concerns do you carry? What are you thankful for? When have you experienced the Lord's presence? Journal your thoughts and offer these to the Lord.

## Scripture Reading- Judas and Peter- John 13:18-38



*Judas and Peter by Leonardo da Vinci 1495*

Their lives are forever linked. Both men were loved and called by Jesus to be with him and serve others. Both had important roles in the community of disciples; Judas as the treasurer and Peter as a primary leader. Both spent three years listening to him teach and watching him heal. Both experienced disillusionment. And when Jesus was in his hour of need, both men failed him. Judas betrayed him and Peter denied him. Scripture tells us that both men were remorseful for their actions.

But that is where the similarities stopped. Peter's remorse led him to repent, confess his sins and in humbleness of heart return to Jesus. Judas on the other hand took matters into his own hands and committed suicide. Read the passage through slowly three times. Pay attention to your heart as you read. If something catches your attention, return to explore that section of the Word. Journal your thoughts.

**Art Reflection-** This reproduction of a chalk and charcoal drawing done by Leonardo da Vinci in 1495 was a study he did for his famous fresco of the Last Supper. Judas and Peter were seated together and the painting captures the moment when Jesus announced to his disciples that he would be betrayed by one of them. Peter leans in towards Jesus with a question forming on his lips. You can see sadness in his eyes. Judas on the other hand has his jaw clinched and his chin out in defiance. Though his traitorous plot had been exposed, he was determined to see it through. He failed to recognize that the revelation of his plan was a final invitation to repent.

The painting also asks a question. Why does one man return to Jesus after his failure while the other turns forever away? Da Vinci may hint at an answer by depicting two men of different age. Peter was painted older with gray hair. He had lived long enough to experience the folly of pride. He had learned to question his own motives. Judas on the other hand was painted younger. He was impatient for change and lacked self knowledge that might have saved his soul.

## *Reading for Reflection*

The disconnect between church and world is growing, though it has gone largely unnoticed by too many in the church. Is it a wonder that in such circumstances, a growing number of people in the West are finding the church irrelevant, if not judgmental? Is it any wonder that we have become a largely “post-Christian” culture in the West? Rather than affirming with our brothers and sisters God’s Presence throughout God’s world, Christians have too often been pouring cold water on that spark. The unfortunate result has been twofold: on the one side, there has been for those of us in the church a loss of opportunity for dialogue and witness. If Christians are uninterested in our neighbors’ spirituality, why should they be interested in ours? And on the other side, turning from what might be labeled “evangelism” to that which is often termed “discipleship,” if God has indeed revealed himself to others through creation, conscience, and culture, then we ourselves are impoverishing ourselves in our relationship with and knowledge of God to the degree that we are insensitive to that divine Presence in others.

Robert Johnston in *God’s Wider Presence: Reconsidering General Revelation*

My relationship to God resembles my relationship to my mother, nothing can alter the fact that she is my mother who bore me, fed and cared for me in my infancy. Just so God is my Author, who is intimately related to me whether I will it or not. To be aware of God must be to be aware of him as my God, the God whose power and wisdom sustains me in existence. To be aware of one as intimate to me and as demanding as God, is perhaps more than I really want. Perhaps this is the greatest of all the obstacles to the realization of God’s presence, the fact that we only want it half-heartedly and that a strong consciousness of God’s presence might be more than we bargained for.

*Christopher Bryant in the River Within, page 86*

Jesus saw the forces of evil as a menace which today we are inclined to underestimate. But evil is often better resisted indirectly by strengthening our attachment to the good rather than by direct confrontation.

*Christopher Bryant in the River Within, page 109*

We know God as children know the ocean after a single visit to the seaside. They know the look of the sea from the shore, they know the feel of water washing against their legs when paddling, they know the salt taste of the sea. But they don’t know the ocean, its vast extent, its teeming life, the contours of the ocean bed, its tides, its storms, and its currents. So we know God and we don’t know him. But though we know God so little we can trust him, we can commit ourselves to him, we can respond to the intimations of glory and majesty with which he visits us.

*Christopher Bryant in the River Within, page 82*

## *Benediction*

Christ is Risen: The world below lies desolate;  
Christ is Risen: The spirits of evil are fallen;  
Christ is Risen: The angels of God are rejoicing;  
Christ is Risen: The tombs of the dead are empty;  
Christ is Risen indeed from the dead,  
the first of the sleepers,  
Glory and power are his forever and ever.

*St. Hippolytus of Rome (AD 190-236)*

