

Making Space for God

Orange County Area Team
January 7, 2004

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does he prospers.

Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish.

Rooted in God's Love

The purpose of today is to examine your life over the past three months, to look at your root system, your life with Jesus and his people, and to take stock of your spiritual and emotional health. It is a time to wait on the Lord. He may have something he wants to say to you. Finally it is a time to plan for the next three months. What will you need to do to live in a way that enables you to do the Lord's ministry and stay rooted in Jesus at the same time?

Reflective Questions:

1. What is happening to your body? Are you anxious, tired, sad, or restless? Your body belongs to him? How have you treated his body these past months? What would you do differently these next months?
2. Review your journal for the Fall. Do you see any repeated themes to your entries? What were your longings, hopes and fears?
3. How did you do on making space for prayer and reflection during the Fall? What would you do differently?
4. What Scriptures spoke to you? Where did you see Jesus at work in your midst?
5. What disciplines helped you to stay in touch with Jesus? What hindered you in your relationship to Jesus? What would you like to do about those things that help and those things that hinder?
6. How are you doing in relating to your family members? What would you like to change?
7. What ministry concerns do you have for the next three months?

Invocation - O Lord God, whose chosen dwelling is the hearts of the lowly: We give you thanks that you have revealed yourself in the holy child Jesus, thereby sanctifying all childhood in him. We beseech you to make us humble in faith and love, that we may know the joy of the Gospel that is hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes. Amen --From the *Book of Worship*

Scripture Study - Review the following passages. Psalm

1, John 15: 1-17, Ephesians 3: 14-19.

Reading for Reflection

Prayer is one way in which we actively engage in changing the world. The contemplative who can stand back from a situation and see it for what it is is more threatening to an unjust social system than the frenzied activist who is so involved in the situation that he cannot see clearly at all. Thus, we do not stop prayer or worship, even though justice is not accomplished and our compassion is incomplete and all relationships are not healed. In fact, we recognize not only that our just relationships are needed for communion with God but also that communion with God is necessary for establishing such relationships.

Don Postema, *Making Space for God*

Thus to be a believer today is to live in a certain moral loneliness. To sustain faith today is not to vote with the majority, but rather to be what sociologists term a cognitive minority, that is, to stand outside of the dominant consciousness. One can no longer simply roll with the flow of one's own particular community, even one's faith community, if one wishes to have a living faith...Even within our churches it is easier to have a faith in Christianity, in a code of ethics, in Jesus' moral teaching, in God's call for justice, and in the human value of gathering as a community, than it is to have personal faith in a living God. Too often what we have, in fact, is not Christianity but an ideology of Christianity.

Ronald Rolheiser in *The Holy Longing*, page 216-217

So how do we become mystics in the midst of all of this? Virtually all the classical spiritual writers, from every tradition, suggest one road beyond all of this, private prayer. Among classical spiritual writers, there is this leitmotif: In order to sustain yourself in faith you must regularly (most would say daily) spend an extended period of private prayer. Failure to do so, they warn, results in a certain dissipation of the soul, even when our sincerity remains intact. There is no way to stay in touch with one's soul and to keep a balance there, outside of regular private prayer.

Ronald Rolheiser in *The Holy Longing*, page 218

If you don't pray you will inevitably become either depressed or inflated- or bounce back and forth between the two. Only prayer can provide for you that fine line (spiritual, psychological, emotional) between depression and inflation.

Ronald Rolheiser in *The Holy Longing*, page 218

Benediction:

I pray that being rooted and established in love you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3: 17-18