

# A Morning of Listening

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December 13, 2012

## Getting Started

For some this time is a welcomed friend. What a gift to have over 2 hours to just be with and listen to Jesus. For others, this feels a bit intimidating. If it's a welcome friend, dive in! If it feels a bit scary to have this much time, don't panic – you can use these pages to guide your time.

## Focusing in Prayer [adapted from *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, p. 209]

1. **Settle in to a comfortable position.**

2. **Intentionally place yourself in the presence of God**, in the center of his love. Let these verses fill your mind and heart with the reality of who God is in this moment. Circle the words that seem to jump from the page to your heart.

### Psalm 23:1-3

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,  
he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right path for his name's sake.*

### Psalm 121:1-2

*I look up to the mountains;  
does my strength come from mountains?  
No, my strength comes from God,  
who made heaven, and earth, and mountains.*

### John 1:14

*The Word [who is God] became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

### Colossians 1:15-20

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created . . . He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

3. **Choose a simple word, phrase or verse** from the Scripture that expresses your desire for God right now (e.g. Shepherd, glory, strength, etc.). Let this word become the initial focus of your attention.

4. **Take time to become quiet.** It is not unusual for the first minutes to be filled with many noisy thoughts. Don't worry about them or pay attention to them. Let them go. Gently return your attention to the center of God's presence and love by repeating your word or phrase. When your thoughts wander, let them drop to the bottom of your mind. Don't go after them. Gently return to the presence of Christ by repeating your word. Let the word draw your attention back to Jesus. *Be* with Jesus. Listen. Be still. When distractions persist, let one of the following images help you return to Jesus.

- Imagine that God's river of life runs through you. Deep down, the river is calm and slow, but on the surface there is rushing and debris. Imagine your distracting thoughts are part of the debris floating in the current. Don't try to capture these thoughts; release them and let the river of God's life carry them away. Anytime you are distracted, let the distractions go with the river. Gently return to the presence of Christ with your prayer word.
- Imagine that you are visiting a friend who lives on a busy city street. Because it is a warm day, the windows are open and all the noise and bustle of life float into the room through the window. At times you are conscious of sirens or people talking or children laughing, but your attention is devoted to your friend, and you do not let your mind follow the sounds outside. As you meet with Jesus, acknowledge the noisy distractions that pull at your attention, but continually return to the moment with Jesus through your prayer word.

5. **Rest in the center of God's love.** Trust that the Holy Spirit who abides in the depths of your spirit to connect you to God.

6. **Don't hurry your prayer.** Breathe in the presence of Christ. Offer yourself to God for the tasks awaiting you (e.g., "I'm yours," or "Remain with me"). Listen for his whisper.

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*"In prayer we seek God. We do not seek peace, quiet, tranquility, enlightenment; we do not seek anything for ourselves. We seek to give ourselves . . . to God. He is the all of our prayers."*

M. Basil Pennington

**Acts 17:24-29**

[From The Message]

*"The God who made the world and everything in it, this Master of sky and land, doesn't live in custom-made shrines or need the human race to run errands for him, as if he couldn't take care of himself. He makes the creatures; the creatures don't make him. Starting from scratch, he made the entire human race and made the earth hospitable, with plenty of time and space for living so we could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find him. He doesn't play hide-and-seek with us. He's not remote; he's near. We live and move in him, can't get away from him!*

*One of your poets said it well: 'We're the God-created.'*

**John 14:23**

*Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."*

**Psalm 62:1, 5**

*Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him . . .  
Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.*

**Psalm 91:1-3**

*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.  
<sup>2</sup> I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."*

Record your prayers here . . .