



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 20th Oct 2019

1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself might pray the text over the next few days.
4. Over the next week, set aside times to come back more than once to the passage. You could read it all or part of it again, slowly. Perhaps there is a special word for you in this passage of Scripture? Keep this word or phrase in your thoughts and gently repeat it, bringing it to mind and allowing God to speak to you in your heart.
5. Finally, come back to the text to conclude: What is God in this scripture asking of you this week? What is the one challenge, one little change you are asked to make or the thing you have been asked to do? Then say a prayer of thanksgiving for the good news in the passage. End in quiet prayer.



THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL - Luke 18:1-8

Like the persevering widow calling for justice, we are never to grow discouraged Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"
And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

A THOUGHT

I have to admit, I do not always find prayer easy. Growing up we learned a series of prayers by heart, we repeat them frequently, but they do not seem to put us in authentic communication with God. We know many prayers, but we find it hard to pray. I wish I could have heard the Apostles pray. What did they pray for? How did they pray? I think that when they prayed, they reflected on every word the Lord spoke and every deed the Lord did. After all, what is Scripture if not the life of Jesus Christ in their own words? Prayer is not a one way form of communication with God. It is not my opportunity to get a word in with my Lord and King. It is not like a visit to my therapist or psychologist or counsellor, where I do all the talking (or complaining) and He does all the listening and understanding. It is a much more than that. It is a time to be in Him, with Him and through Him. If I want to know more about God, then I need to pray. If I want to learn more about myself, then I need to pray. If I want to make the right decisions in my life, then I need to pray.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- Do I find it easy to persist in praying for what I need? I might be surprised to discover that prolonged prayer opens my heart even more to God's provident care in my life, so that I find myself growing in trust.
- 'Will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?' Do I join those crying for justice, bringing to my prayer some situation of deep seated conflict or injustice I know well?
- Our persistence in prayer does not change God's mind. Instead it prepares our own heart by strengthening our desire for God! When have I been surprised by my prayer? When have I found God in prayer?
- Prayer is active not passive. It is an honest, real and uncompromising opening of myself to my God. How do I pray?

Prayer

Lord, our help and guide, make your love the foundation of our lives. May our love for you and our relationship with you express itself in our eagerness to do good for others. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen