



# *Prayer*

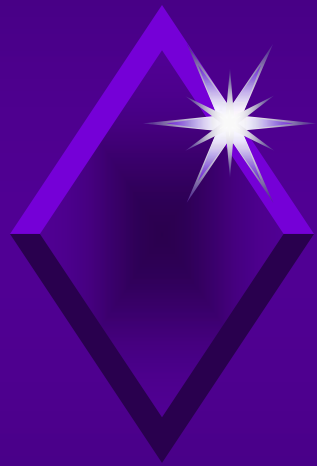
**Finding the Heart's True Home**

**Based on the book**

**by Richard J. Foster**



The ideas and concepts of this presentation are based entirely on the work of Richard J. Foster unless otherwise stated.



# *Formation Prayer*

*Prayer – secret, fervent, believing  
prayer – lies at the root of all personal  
godliness.*

*William Cary*



## *What is Formation Prayer?*

- A process of transformation in which our lives increasingly mirror the Son's
- Formation prayer begins when our simple prayers are not answered in the way we expect
- We begin a process of change called *conversatio morum* or death of the *status quo*



## *What is Formation Prayer?*

- Prayer is only one element in the process of Christian formation
- Formation prayer is both an active and passive process
- We are both pursuing God and being pursued by God



# *Model One-- The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*

- Week 1—Contemplate our sins in the light of the love of Christ
- Week 2—Focus on the life of Christ and earnestly seek to conform our lives to his
- Week 3—Contemplate the passion of Christ and seek to die to our own idolatries
- Week 4—Contemplate the resurrection of Christ and seek the power of the Spirit to live our lives in conformity with Christ's



## *Model Two – St. Benedict's Rule*

- Composed of 12 steps toward humility
- *“Humility means to live as close to the truth as possible”*
- Reverence God in daily life
- Confess any sinful thought or action to God



## *Model Two – St. Benedict's Rule*

- Do God's will instead of our own
- Cultivate silence in place of idle speech
  - Use plain, simple speech
- Endure *"with patience the injuries and afflictions we face"*
- *"Be content in all things"*





## *Model Three--The Little Way*

- Based on the approach of St. Therese of Lisieux
- *“To seek out the menial job, to welcome unjust criticisms, to befriend those who annoy us, to help those who are ungrateful”*
- A way of life that anyone can engage in everyday



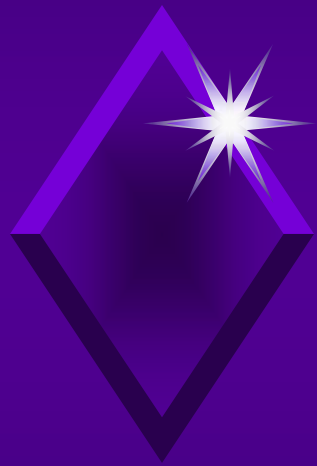
# *Solitude*

- Will be viewed by others as selfish and slothful
- We learn to let go of the opinions of others
- Our true self is unmasked
- *“Solitude gives us the power not to win the rat race but to ignore the rat race altogether.”*



## *Other Ways to do Formation Prayer*

- Contemplate our own death
  - Brings humility
  - Best done in light of Gal. 2:19 – what does it mean to be crucified with Christ?
- Practice the prayer of docility
  - Surrender ourselves to the hands of God, the potter
  - *A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench. Isaiah 42:3*



# *Covenant Prayer*

*What we need is a desire to know the whole will of God, with a fixed resolution to do it.*

*John Wesley*



# *Fear of Commitment*

- Covenant prayer is a promise of holy obedience
- Self-discipline is the means to true freedom
- *“Prayer is not a free-will offering to God; it is an obligatory service, something which he requires.”*  
*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*
- *Duty is “the sacrament of the present moment.”*  
*de Caussade*
- God, who is merciful, is mindful of our intentions as well as our broken promises



## *Covenants and the Bible*

- God made a covenant with Abraham to bless him, give him descendents & land
- God made a covenant with the Hebrew people through the 10 Commandments
- In new covenant of Jesus Christ, the commandments are to be written on our hearts



# *Obedience*

- The gift of God who first gives us the desire to obey and then empowers us
- Obedience is the result of falling in love with God
- Means being aware of obeying God in the small things
- A matter of practice – most of us don't get it right the first time
- Obedience in the small things strengthens us to obey in the large things



# *A Time Commitment*

- St. Benedict urged regularity in prayer
  - Interruption of work reveals true priorities
  - Reminds us for whom we are working
- Meaning of regularity will vary
- *“The truth is that we only learn to pray all the time everywhere after we have resolutely set about praying some of the time somewhere.”*  
John Dalrymple
- May choose to be accountable to one another in a small group





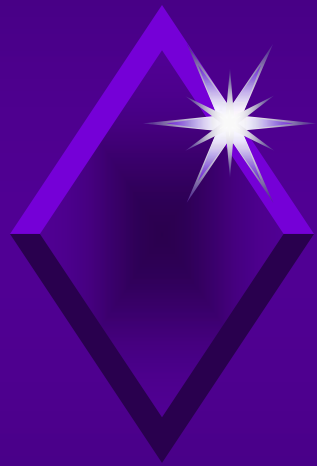
## *Covenant of Place*

- Finding a place for prayer gives us focus
- Place may be within a small group – for mutual support



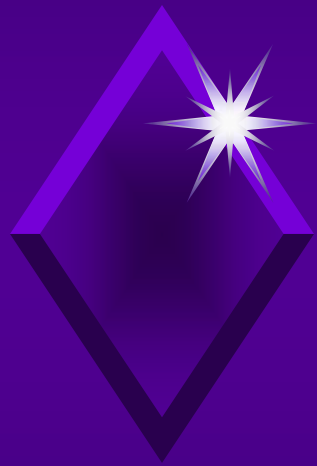
## *Preparing Our Heart*

- Meet God with expectant listening for *Kol Yahweh*, the voice of God
- Keep silence — “*The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.*” Hab. 2:20
- Read a psalm
- Light a candle; pray with your morning coffee in hand



# *Moving Upward*

Seeking the Intimacy We Need



# *Prayer of Adoration*

*In the school of adoration the soul  
learns why the approach to every other goal  
had left it restless.*

*Douglas Steere*



- All prayer will contain elements of adoration
- *“In the prayer of adoration we love God for himself, for his very being, for his radiant joy.”* Douglas Steere
- We begin by blessing and enter the silence of awe and adoration



## *Praise / Thanksgiving*

- Thanksgiving – glorify God because of what God has done for us
- Praise – glorify God because of who God is
- An artificial distinction since strains of both elements will be present



## *God Receives Our Adoration*

- *“God thirsts to be thirsted after.”* St. Augustine
- *“Our God is not made of stone. His heart is the most sensitive and tender of all. No act goes unnoticed, no matter how insignificant or small.”*



# *Obstacles*

- Inattention – we simply miss God’s presence in the midst of our lives
- Wrong kind of attention – we analyze instead of praise or we are not interruptible
- Greed – in the presence of God’s gracious gifts we ask for more
- Conceit – we focus on our ability to see God in ways that others cannot





## *What it Takes*

- Requires instruction just as children must be taught to say thank you
- Begins in ordinary life by attending to the small blessings of God
- *“To experience the tiny theophany is itself to adore.”* C. S. Lewis
- Find our “grateful center” (from Sue Monk Kidd)



## *What it Takes*

- Practice gratitude for the blessings we receive each day
- Practice magnifying God; making God larger
  - Use the Psalms as a guide to praise
  - Use music
- Celebrate the work of God like Miriam at the shore of the Red Sea



## *Prayer of Rest*

*Rest. Rest. Rest in God's love. The only work you are required now to do is to give your most intense attention to His still, small voice within.*

Madame Jeanne Guyon



- Like being in the eye of the storm while we are surrounded by chaos
- The invitation of Jesus: *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* Matt. 11:29



## *Sabbath Prayer*

- Not primarily a cessation of work
- Means surrendering our desire to get ahead and get more
- Means trusting God to care for us
- “Does not promote inactivity, but it does promote dependent activity”



## *Prayer in the Middle Voice*

- *“Resting in God does not mean resignation or idleness. It does not mean that we sit back and hope God will do something. That is a Hindu concept of prayer, in which we sink passively into the impersonal and fated will of gods and goddesses.”*
- *“In the middle voice we both act and are acted upon. We participate in the formation of the action and reap the benefits of it.”*
- *Called “holy leisure” — continuing our daily life in the presence of God*



## *Activity of the Trinity*

- Work of prayer is not ours alone
- *“The spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” Rom. 8:26-27*



## *Activity of the Trinity*

- *“The Spirit reshapes, refines, and reinterprets our feeble, ego-driven prayers. We can rest in this work of the Spirit on our behalf.”*
- We participate in the trinitarian communion
  - God the Spirit interprets our words and sighs
  - God the Son pleads our case before God the Father
  - God the Father hears our prayers as part of the divine trilogy





# *Classical Sabbath Prayer*

- Solitude
  - Simplifies us
  - We learn to let go
  - Follows Jesus' pattern of prayer



# *Classical Sabbath Prayer*

- Silencio
  - A renunciation of our grasping, controlling natures
  - Allows God to rearrange our priorities
  - Allows us to hear God
- Recollection
  - *“Focus”*
  - *“Tranquility of mind, heart and spirit”*



## *Cupping the Hands Lightly*

- *“The hands of God are cupped lightly. We have enough freedom so that we can stretch and grow, but also we have enough protection so that we will not be injured – and so we can be healed.”*