



Communal Prayer Exercise

A community creates a 'God-enlightened space' in which to experience the hidden presence of the Risen Lord. (c.f. Gaudete et Exsultate #142)

PREPARATION

- 1) **Decide the length of time for prayer**
For this exercise, you have half an hour.
- 2) **Decide on the intention**
Discuss and decide as a group what you are seeking and desiring from the Lord at this time of prayer.
- 3) **Decide on the scripture text**
For this exercise, use Mk 8:27-35
- 4) **Facilitator**
Appoint someone from the group to facilitate.

PRAYER PERIOD

The threshold of prayer

- 1) Check-in
Invite everyone to sit comfortably. Do a round of 'check-in' by inviting everyone to introduce themselves and how they are feeling. (refer to feeling chart)
- 2) Acknowledgement
If the group has a group desire or intention, remind everyone here in this time of prayer. (e.g. unity in the group) Have everyone look around to acknowledge each other as they hold this prayer space together.
Light the candle to ask God to guide

everyone during this time of prayer.

- 3) Opening Prayer
Prayer is God's GIFT - pray these words: **"Come Lord Jesus, come and be with us. We ask for your grace in this time of prayer. Let us open our hearts and mind to you Lord Jesus, teach and guide us."**
Let us take a deep breath and imagine Jesus Christ inviting us into this time together.

Prayer

- 1) 1st Reading
Introduce the scripture passage that the group has decided for this time of prayer. Invite someone to read the passage attentively and loudly for everyone. (Focus on listening to the word or phrase from the text that the Holy Spirit impresses on you.)
- 2) Pause and 1st Response
Each person shares with the group by speaking out loud the word or phrase without any explanation or commentary. If someone has not received a word or phrase, do not feel discouraged, keep listening as it may come later.
- 3) 2nd Reading
Invite someone else to read the passage again slowly. This time, invite everyone to enter into the scripture passage: What feelings arise? What emotions come up for you? How does

the passage speak to the group's desire/intention?

- 4) **Pause and 2nd Response**
Invite members of the group to offer a short prayer aloud expressing feelings or emotions or the promptings to the group's desire/intention. (e.g. Group's desire is for unity and scripture text is on Vine and branches, the prayer may be: Loving Jesus, we thank you for your Word, indeed you are the vine that binds us the branches together, may we never lose sight of you in the life of our community/group) The prayer is from a personal perspective expressed out loud for the group.
- 5) **3rd Reading**
Invite someone else to read the passage a third time. This time, invite the group to look at what is God saying to the group from the passage? If prayer is a conversation with God our Father, we listen attentively to Him by not forming opinions in our heads. Instead we listen to understand.
- 6) **Pause & 3rd Response** (** if there is not enough time at this exercise, just have one or two sharing*)
Inviting group members to share what they have heard briefly. Gently remind everyone to refrain from offering advice or counselling.
- 7) **Closing prayer.**
The group may decide to close the time of prayer with members interceding for each other and end off with 'Glory be' or have someone articulate the closing prayer expressing what the group has heard and thanking Jesus Christ for this time of prayer.

REVIEW

- 1) Have a quick review to see how the time of prayer has been.
- 2) Ask questions like: **'Does everyone feel comfortable sharing and praying?'**
'Was the timing right?'
'What was done well?'
'What can be improved upon?'

(This is an adapted and shortened version of Lectio Divina)