

The One Body Initiative: Week 3 – Engaging Relationship With God

February 26th, 2021

Scripture:

- [Psalm 8](#)
- [Psalm 13](#)
- [Psalm 91](#)

Food for Thought:

“I have been overcome with grief at times, and felt my heart like a stone in my breast, it was so heavy, and always I have heard, too, that voice, ‘Pray.’ What can we do? We can pray. We can pray without ceasing, as Saint Paul said. We can say with the Apostles, ‘Lord, teach me to pray.’ We can say with Saint Paul, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* (Acts 22:10). Will our Father give us a stone when we ask for bread?”

- Dorothy Day, “The Importance of Prayer,” [Full reflection linked below]

“Prayer does not blind us to the world, but it transforms our vision of the world, and makes us see it, [the history of humanity], in the light of God. To pray 'in spirit and in truth' enables us to enter into contact with that infinite love, that inscrutable freedom which is at work behind the complexities and the intricacies of human existence. This does not mean fabricating for ourselves pious rationalizations to explain everything that happens. It involves no surreptitious manipulation of the hard truths of life.”

- Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*

“But there is no compulsion to pray: we can freely decide to pray or to neglect prayer. When we say that prayer is necessary, we mean necessary for the highest part of [human] nature; and just as the highest part of [the person]—[the] soul—is often ignored, so too is prayer. For prayer is not easy. It is not the speaking of many words, or the hypnotic spell of the recited formula; it is the raising of the heart and mind to God in constantly renewed acts of love. We must go forward to grapple with prayer, as Jacob wrestled with the angel. We must lift high our lamp of faith that it may show us what prayer is, and what are its power and dignity. Into the darkness we must whisper our prayer: Lord, teach us how to pray.”

- Karl Rahner, *On Prayer*

Reflection Questions:

- If you were asked to define “prayer” in one sentence, what would you say?
- Has this changed from when you started college? From when you were younger? How?
- Who is someone who has modeled prayer for you in a meaningful way?
- What feels most challenging about developing a prayer life right now? Why?
- Do you have a favorite way to pray right now? What draws you toward it?
- Developing a life of prayer requires some attention to our habits – what is helpful for you when forming a new habit? How do you encourage yourself to keep going?
- How has community been a part of your life of prayer?

Material for Further Consideration:

Scripture verses

- Mark 1:35 – *Jesus goes to a secluded place to pray*
- Luke 10:38-42 – *“But few things are needed—or indeed only one”*
- Luke 11:1-11 – *The disciples ask, “Lord, teach us how to pray.”*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – *“Pray without ceasing.”*

Additional resources:

- [The Importance of Prayer](#) (Dorothy Day - short reflection)
- [How to Start \(and Sustain\) A New Prayer Practice](#) (Grotto Network - article)
- [What is the Book of Psalms?](#) (The Bible Project - 5-min. video)

Exploring ways to pray

- If you participated in the One Body Initiative in the fall, you might have encountered some of these introductions to different prayer forms. Consider exploring one or more of these ways to pray:
 - [The Examen](#)
 - [Ignatian \(or Imaginative\) Prayer](#)
 - [Prayer Journaling](#)
 - [Centering Prayer](#)
- A few more ways to pray
 - [Praying through the News](#) (An Ignatian-inspired guide)
 - [Praying through Music](#) (the Porter’s Gate Worship Project)
 - [Praying through Poetry](#) (A poem from Mary Karr)