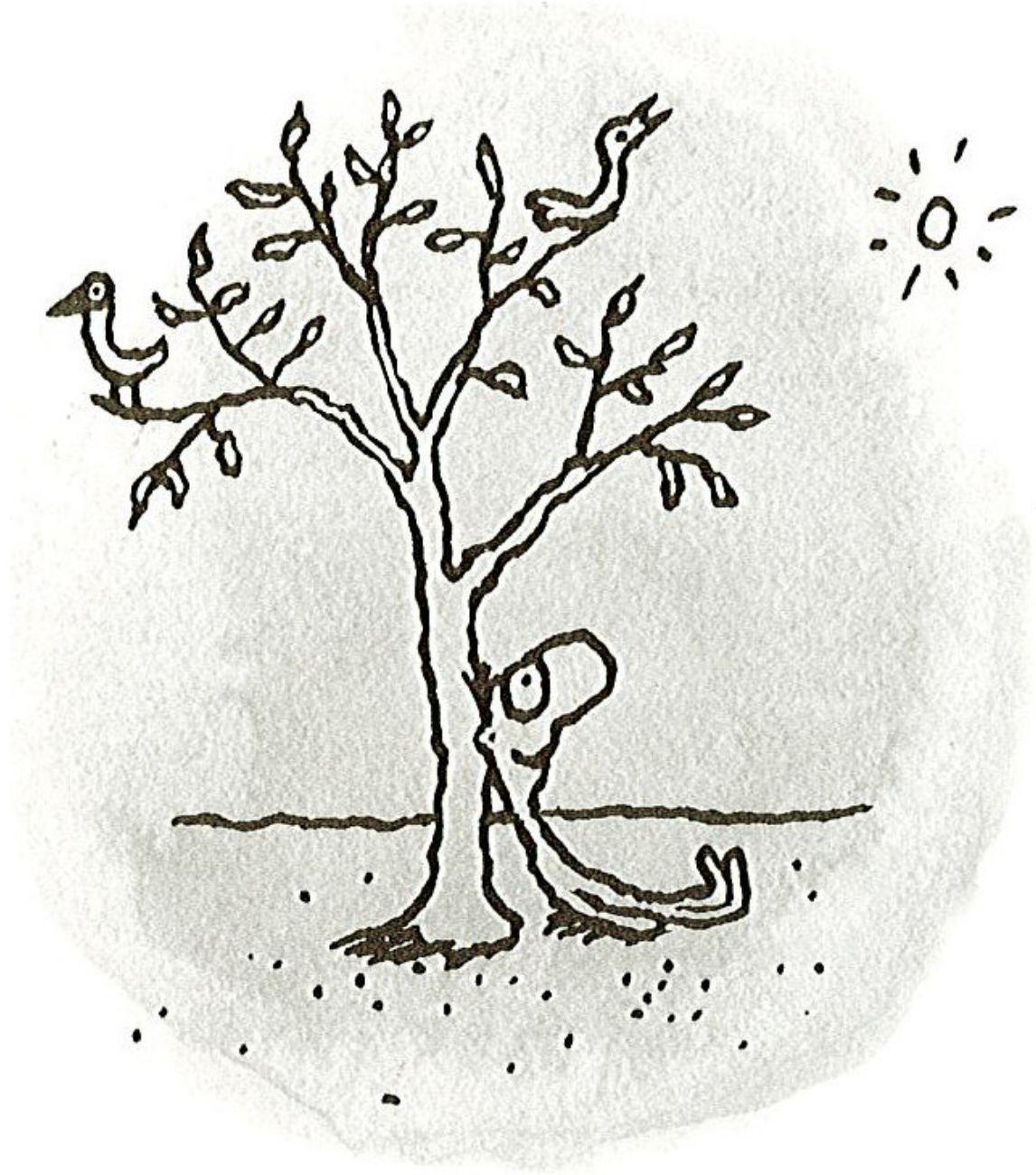


The Everyday Retreat

Week 10 – The Freedom of Discipline



leunis

24th – 30th August

Freedom of Discipline.

This is the final in the series of the 10 week 'Everyday Retreat'. Where to now? The aim of the retreat has been to help you explore methods of prayer that have been utilised by Christians for hundreds of years as they sought to listen to the Spirit and grow in closer relationship to God. Hopefully your spiritual journey has been enriched as you have applied the methods of prayer to the daily readings.


Yet finding the time to pray in our busy lives is difficult. Maybe you have wanted to give time to your prayer life over this time, and have the desire to deepen your relationship with God, but have not achieved your aims. God has not set us free to make us a slave to our own perceived spiritual performance. The key here lies in the phrase, "Don't feel guilty, feel ripped off! (Thanks to Pr Andrew McLean for that line.) There is nothing we can do to make God love us more, and nothing we can do (or not do) to make God love us less. BUT, when we do not pray, and do not spend time listening, we are cheating ourselves out of the rich and free life we can experience in Christ. Our God is a gracious and generous God who desires to give us good gifts. All we need do is show up!

If you would like to continue the journey of contemplative prayer, it is a good tenet to remember that you should "Pray as you can, not as you can't." However there are a few simple tips that can help you to pray as you would like to;

- Develop a routine. Find a time of the day that allows you to spend time undisturbed with God. Many people love to pray early in the morning.
- Decide on a time you will spend in prayer and stay with it. Often we give up just before we would experience greater insight, grace or peace. If you set a time limit (eg 15 minutes, 30 minutes, 1 hour) you are not governed by your emotions in deciding when to end a prayer period.
- Find a place in or around your home to set aside as your prayer space. You may even like to create a home altar, or just use images or objects that create the mood you want.
- Begin with a prayer you love, or a simple focus prayer such as “Come Holy Spirit”. You may like to end with the Lord’s Prayer.
- Find opportunities to pray with others using the methods taught in “The Everyday Retreat” (eg At the monthly ‘Reflect’ service, or participating in “Sacred Quest”.) Corporate prayer (or corporate listening!) can be a powerful experience.
- Keep a journal. This will not only remind you of particular threads you may wish to follow from your previous prayer period, but over months of praying you will have developed an incredible record of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

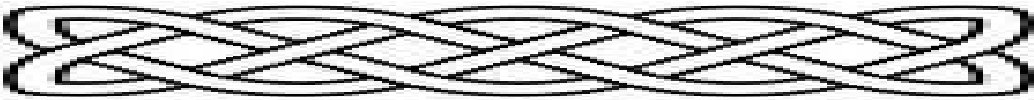
Developing spiritual discipline is about finding a way to freedom. Prayer is a subversive activity! In praying we choose to take defiant action against

a world that would tell us that if we aren't only doing what we want, what feels good to us, or earns us money, we are missing out. In praying we can discover the paradox that it is seeking God that we find the freedom and the self-confidence to be who we are; in giving up time that we live our time more richly; and it is in dying to ourselves that our selves become most truly alive.

 With the drawing of this Love
and the voice of this Calling
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

- *T.S Eliot (from Four Quartets)*

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever
loses his life for my sake will find it.....
...Come, follow me.... **Jesus**



Luke 14:25-34
2 Peter 1:3-11
Galatians 5:1-15
2 Corinthians 12:8-10
Psalm 130

