

Gospel Contemplation

This way of prayer can be “the most consoling or the most desolate wasteland you have ever walked through”—the reality of our experience of prayer is that it can be either of these extremes or something in between. The ‘goal’ is not to have a good experience but to deepen our life in God; this sometimes happens in ways that we are unaware of.

When we have periods of silence or prayer that seem dry and ‘unproductive’ we can still trust in God’s grace at work within us.

Quiet yourself. Relax. Breathe deeply several times.

Declare your dependence on God. Recognize that you cannot make anything happen.

Ask God for what you want and need in the prayer time—for a grace. A common one to ask for is to know Jesus more, to love him more and to follow him more closely.

Enter the passage by way of the imagination, making use of all your senses.

Watch what happens, listen to what is being said, imagine what the smells would have been, the tastes in your mouth, the textures on your skin.

Read the passage once:

Enter the story as if you are there.

Look at each individual. What does he or she experience?

How do they interact with Jesus?

Become part of the mystery; assume the role of one of the persons in the story.

Who are you in the story, and where are you? Place yourself in the story, even if you are an observer.

Read the passage again and notice:

What catches your attention in the story?

Does the gospel event bring to the surface a question? a wondering? a strong feeling?

How do you feel about the people in the story?

Stay in the place in the story where you sense some inner movement.

Notice how close or far away from Jesus you are.

Now as you read a third time pay particular attention to Jesus and your response to him:

Talk to Jesus. Tell him your feelings, ask him your questions, share your fears or wonderings.

Talk to him about whatever is on your mind and heart.

Close with a conversation with God about your experience of prayer.

Journal about your experience of prayer.