

The Fast I Choose: *Living with Intentionality*

Service

Weekly Lenten Prayer Service

Please see your Lenten Orders for Praise & Prayer booklet.

Check in

Participants are invited to share a bit of their soul each week by answering this check-in question.

What inspires you the most?

Sermon Focus

Participants should take turns reading the section below.

This week's sermon looked at the Nicodemus story and talked about the true meaning of service.

Nicodemus came to Jesus with his expectations wanting to be filled. He wanted Jesus to answer *his* questions with the answers that would best suit *him*, that would make *his* life the easiest.

There is a chance many of us come to Jesus looking for the same thing. We, like Nicodemus, come to Jesus in the middle of the night, shrouded in darkness so that our relationship with Jesus may not be known too clearly by our peers. We meet Jesus where *we* are comfortable meeting him. We come with our specific needs in mind. We, like Nicodemus, may be searching for answers but unwilling to change who we are or what we do in order to meet the needs of others. Nicodemus' conversation with Jesus was self-centered. He realized and admitted that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, but was not willing to make the lifestyle changes that would help turn his intentions to the needs of others. He was not willing to openly question the authority or intentions of his fellow pharisees. He was not about to use his social position or stature to spread the gospel.

Receiving a feel-good feeling from living out your relationship with God is good. It's normal. It's one of the ways we know we are doing the right thing. But failing to listen to the needs of others and neglecting to make sure that they receive the feelings, the supplies, and the sense of autonomy that they need, may be a sign that we are participating in acts of *service* that really only *serve us*.

Our acts of mission require an organization of resources and people that can execute orders quickly. Our acts of structural change require real relationships for

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the work to succeed, where all parties are heard, seen and known. Our calling to service is real, and it matters.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it look like to intentionally participate in the life of the church by our *service*?
2. What is the difference between having a servant's heart and participating in a service activity?
3. Where do you feel called to help meet the immediate needs of others (mission)? Where do you feel called to help do the structural work of change (social justice)?

Spiritual Practice

Each week of Lent we will participate in a different prayer practice.

For our spiritual practice this week each person will create a "Rule of Life." A "Rule of Life" is a written commitment to live your life in a particular way. You read this rule every day. Please feel free to write your rule of life in your Prayer Journal if you'd like. Below are two examples of a "Rule of Life." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had every member in the movement he led agree to follow his rule and recite it daily.

"Rule of Life" by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Meditate daily on the teachings and life of Jesus.
- Remember always that the nonviolent movement in Birmingham [or anywhere] seeks justice and reconciliation, not victory.
- Walk and talk in the manner of love, for God is love.
- Pray daily to be used by God in order that all might be free.
- Observe with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy.
- Seek to perform regular service for others and the world.
- Refrain from violence of fist, tongue, or heart.
- Strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.

The Benedictine rule below is the first of the many rules of their order, dating back to the 6th century.

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The First Rule (Benedictine)

Attend to these instructions,
Listen with the heart and the mind;
they are provided in a spirit of goodwill.
These words are addressed to anyone
who is willing to renounce the delusion
that the meaning of life can be learned;
whoever is ready to take up
the greater weapon of fidelity
to a way of living
that transcends understanding.

The first rule is simply this:
live this life
and do whatever is done,
in a spirit of Thanksgiving.

Abandon attempts to achieve security,
they are futile,
give up the search for wealth,
it is demeaning,
quit the search for salvation,
it is selfish,
and come to comfortable rest
in the certainty that those who
participate in this life
with an attitude of Thanksgiving
will receive its full promise.

Some rules of life have exercise goals and sleep schedules worked in. Some people keep a more spiritually based one. This is a chance for you to make your own.

Closing Prayer

Have a new person lead the prayer each week.

Holy God, we give you thanks for the calling you have placed on our lives. Help us to more clearly see that calling, give us the bravery to live into it, even in the discomfort. **Amen.**