

Swaffham Methodist Church: '40-Day Lent Journey with Dietrich Bonhoeffer'

A LENTEN JOURNEY

SWAFFHAM METHODIST CHURCH

14TH FEBRUARY TO 29TH MARCH 2018

Swaffham Methodist Church: '40-Day Lent Journey with Dietrich Bonhoeffer'

Day 1 – Wednesday 14th February (Ash Wednesday)

Those who follow Jesus' commandment entirely, who let Jesus' yoke rest on them without resistance, will find the burden they must bear to be light. In the gentle pressure of this yoke they will receive the strength to walk the right path without becoming weary....Where will the call to discipleship lead those who follow it? What decisions and painful separations will it entail? We must take this question to him who alone knows the answer. Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow him, knows where the path will lead. But we know that it will be a path full of mercy beyond measure. Discipleship is joy.

Biblical Wisdom

Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. [Matthew 11:28–30](#)

Questions to Ponder

- What is Jesus' "commandment" that we are to follow? (See [John 15:12](#))
- If this commandment is Jesus' "yoke," how might we be changed if we bear it without resistance?
- Why might following Jesus' commandment lead to tough "decisions and painful separations"?

Psalm Fragment

*Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.* [Psalm 25:4–5](#)

Journal Reflections

- To be a disciple is not just to believe in Jesus, it is to follow Jesus. In your journal, reflect on the ways in which you are presently following Jesus.
- Do you experience your discipleship as "joy"? Is the "burden" of your discipleship "light"?
- Do you sense there are places Jesus might want to lead you where you would rather not go? If so, where are they and what is holding you back?

Intercessions

Pray specifically for family, friends, and colleagues that they might clearly hear the call to discipleship (which is the call to love and justice), and that they might experience following Jesus' commandment as joy in the concrete realities of their lives.

Prayer for Today

Lord Jesus, only you know where my path will lead, but I trust that, even if I do not know either the way or the destination, you are with me and before me, and I follow you with joy.

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Day 2 - Thursday 15th February

There are three things for which the Christian needs a regular time alone during the day: *meditation on the Scripture, prayer, and intercession...*

In our meditation we read the text given to us on the strength of the promise that it has something quite personal to say to us for this day and for our standing as Christians. It is not only God's Word for the community of faith, but also God's Word for me personally.... We are reading the Word of God as God's Word for us. Therefore, we do not ask what this text has to say to other people. For those of us who are preachers that means we will not ask how we would preach or teach on this text, but what it has to say to us personally.

Biblical Wisdom

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 4:6-7](#)

Questions to Ponder

- Why are meditation on scripture, prayer, and intercession so important to the life of faith?
- What obstacles might stand in the way of taking time alone daily for meditation on scripture, prayer, and intercession? How might they be overcome?
- How might "reading the Word of God as God's Word for us," rather than as God's word for someone else, lead to spiritual transformation?

Psalm Fragment

*How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through your precepts I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.
Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path. [Psalm 119:103-105](#)*

Journal Reflections

- In your journal reflect on your present experiences of prayer and meditation. Are they satisfying to you? Do you give enough time to these activities?
- How could you find more time in your daily life for meditation, prayer, and intercession?
- Write about something you've learned from meditating on scripture recently. How has it changed the way you are in your relationships or at work?

Intercessions

Pray for encouragement and wisdom for you, your family, and spiritual friends (name them) in reading God's Word. Pray for discernment in understanding and praying for the needs of others.

Prayer for Today

Lord, draw me to your living Word and let it be for me food for the journey.

Day 3 - Friday 16th February

This order and discipline must be sought and found in the morning prayer. It will stand the test at work. Prayer offered in early morning is decisive for the day. The wasted time we are ashamed of, the temptations we succumb to, the weakness and discouragement in our work, the disorder and lack of discipline in our thinking and in our dealings with other people. all these very frequently have their cause in our neglect of morning prayer. The ordering and scheduling of our time will become more secure when it comes from prayer.

Biblical Wisdom

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. [Mark 1:35](#)

Questions to Ponder

- In what ways might “prayer offered in the morning” be “decisive for the day”?
- Do you agree that many of the problems we encounter have “their cause in our neglect of morning prayer”? Why, or why not?
- How can prayer lead to the “ordering and scheduling of our time”?

Psalm Fragment

*Give ear to my words, O Lord;
give heed to my sighing.*

*Listen to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray.*

O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice;

in the morning I plead my case to you, and watch. [Psalm 5:1-3](#)

Journal Reflections

- Write about how you usually spend your mornings. What do you do before work or school?
- Are you satisfied with the way you spend your mornings? If not, how would you like to spend your mornings?
- How is prayer presently a part of your morning? Any changes you would like to make?

Prayer for Today

Lord, show me a time in the morning when I can listen to you for the day ahead and when I can talk to you for the day ahead.