

**cell outlines**  
**JULY 2018**

These Cell Outlines are written by Youth and Children's Ministries. They are available every month from our web site. For more information and other Cell resources, visit [salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources](http://salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources)

OVERVIEW

## A CALL TO STOP

This month's Cell notes invite the leaders and Cell group members to stop and evaluate how we use our time and what our priorities are in life. There are a number of books which leaders might find helpful with some further background information which could be read by the cell group to accompany some of the topics addressed in the notes.

- \* *Working From a Place of Rest* – Tony Horsfall
- \* *Too Busy Not to Pray* – Bill Hybels
- \* *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* – Richard Foster
- \* *Celebration of Discipline* – Richard Foster
- \* *Taking Your Spiritual Pulse* – Claire Musters
- \* *Army on its Knees* – Janet Munn and Stephen Court
- \* *God 3600: 120 experiential devotionals* – Andy Flannagan

The start of this month's Cell material might also be a good time to remind the group to download and use the 'Remind' app that will send users daily thoughts, questions and challenges related to the Cell content and topics. You can find it by following this link – [www.remind.com/join/ycmusa](http://www.remind.com/join/ycmusa)

# MARY AND MARTHA

## WELCOME

### Activity

Split the group into two teams. Give each team a few pencils and ask them to spend 3-5 minutes coming up with 10 creative uses for the pencils (other than writing/drawing) – eg as a hair clip, chopsticks, drumsticks, a conductor’s baton, etc. Share the ideas (maybe even try some!).

**Say:** When we stop to think, our brains solve all sorts of problems and come up with all sorts of creative solutions. But how often do we spend time stopping from the business of life in order to think? Today we are going to look at the story of Mary and Martha. Jesus visited their house. Martha tried to be the best hostess she could be and made herself so busy making sure everything was just right for Jesus’ visit. Mary, however, just wanted to spend time with Jesus and simply sat with him.

### Discuss:

- 🗨️ Do you identify more with Mary or Martha?
  - ▶ Mary just wanted to sit and spend time with Jesus.
  - ▶ Martha wanted to do things to serve Jesus.

## WORD

As a group read Luke 10:38-42 *NIV*

### At the home of Martha and Mary

<sup>38</sup> As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’

<sup>41</sup> ‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup> but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’

### Discuss:

- 🗨️ Is there anything that stands out to you in this story?
- 🗨️ What do you think Jesus was referring to when he said only one thing is needed? (Spending time with and having faith in Jesus – he will provide for and meet all our practical needs.)
- 🗨️ How easy do you find it to stop and simply spend time with Jesus?
- 🗨️ Was Martha wrong to be serving Jesus practically? Is it wrong for us to be practically serving Jesus? (Discuss the priorities – if you are too busy serving to spend any time with Jesus, then is that right?)

**Say:** The Salvation Army has two S’s on the lapels of the uniform. Some people believe these S’s signify that Salvationists are ‘Saved to Serve’ whilst others say it is ‘Saved to Save’. The Salvation Army is known for practically outworking its faith by serving others and meeting their needs – but it is also important that we regularly take time to stop and spend time with Jesus.

### Activity

Spend some time thinking about your corps/church. List all the activities your corps/church does (Sunday services,

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band practice, youth club, homeless meals, etc). Discuss together and try to list each activity under serving (like Martha) or resting with God (like Mary). Some will be obvious, such as meals for the homeless or prayer meetings, but others might be less obvious, eg Sunday services when many might be involved in facilitating the worship (music, welcome team, Sunday school, etc).

- \* Do you feel your corps/church has the balance right between resting with and listening to God and serving him?
- \* If not, what are you going to do about it?

Now think about your week. How much time do you personally spend serving Jesus, and how much time do you spend stopping your day-to-day activities to spend time with Jesus?

- \* Do you have the balance right?
- \* If not, what are you going to do about it?

## WORSHIP

**Say:** The theme of this month's Cell notes is 'A Call to Stop'. In our worship times this month we are going to try four meditative exercises. Some of you might find it really hard, but we encourage you to keep going – the first time you tried to ride a bike you probably found it a bit tricky and it felt a bit uncomfortable – but by persevering you might discover a new way of connecting with God.

**Say:** Mary sat at the Lord's feet listening to him. Today in worship we are going to do that. Some of you will find silent meditation quite easy, but to others this will be hard – and that is OK! God speaks in many different ways – through our thoughts, our dreams, pictures, emotions, words read, memories, etc.

We are going to 'do' nothing. We are simply going to stop for five minutes and try and focus our minds on God. If it helps you to focus and listen, you can try closing your eyes and inviting Jesus to meet with you.

**Pray:** Jesus, we welcome you here. We want to meet with you at this time, to sit with you as Mary did and to get to know you better. Come and meet with us now...

(Pause for silent prayer and reflection for at least five minutes. This may be an awkward time for some groups, but often if you allow enough time, the awkwardness goes and the group are able to focus on God. Pray for God's wisdom to help you know when and how to finish this time. Some groups will want to and find it helpful to talk about what they felt God was saying to them during this time. Again, as leaders, pray for wisdom to know if some discussion and debrief would be helpful after this time of prayer.)

## WITNESS

**Say:** This week you are invited to take on the challenge of spending five minutes each day doing nothing – no phones, no music, no activities. In this time, spend time sitting at Jesus' feet and resting in his presence. Some of you will find this harder than others – and that's OK.

You may be questioning how this is 'witness'. But when we stop to connect with God, we get in tune with him, resulting in our lives radiating his love and light into the world.

### Think about:

- \* How is God changing you by spending this time simply resting with him?
- \* When you do any activities this week that practically serve Jesus and build his Kingdom, do you feel or act differently having had this time resting with Jesus each day?
- \* How does the experience of sitting for five minutes in quiet, focused time with Jesus each day change as the week goes on?

(Leaders might want to discuss with their groups finding a time each day when the whole group can do this at the same time just where they are, and that leaders could maybe send out reminder texts each day, making sure this is done in line with your local safeguarding policies and procedures!)

# DAVID (PSALM 23)

## WELCOME

### Discuss

- 🗨️ How did you get on with the challenge from last session's Witness section?
- 🗨️ How did God change you by spending time simply resting with him?
- 🗨️ When you did any activities this week that practically served Jesus and built his Kingdom, did you feel or act differently having had this time resting with Jesus each day?
- 🗨️ How did the experience of sitting for five minutes in quiet, focused time with Jesus each day change as the week went on?

### Game

You will need 6-10 white balloons, an area marked out on the floor about 1/1.5 metres square, and a newspaper. Most of your Cell group will be 'shepherds' but one person is assigned as the 'wolf'. The white balloons are the 'sheep' (you can draw on and decorate the balloons to look like sheep if you wish). The balloons are spread around the room, and the idea is that the shepherds have to get the sheep into the 'pen' (the marked-out area on the floor) only using their feet/bodies (no hands), whilst the 'wolf,' standing a few metres away, has to fan the sheep away from and out of the pen using the newspaper.

**Say:** Today we are going to look at David from the Bible.

### Quiz

#### What do you know about David? (Answers in bold italics)

1. Where was David born? Jerusalem / Bethel / **Bethlehem** / Beersheba
2. Who was David's father? Abraham / **Jesse** / Noah / Moses
3. Which prophet anointed David as king when David was a young boy? Elijah / Isaiah / Amos / **Samuel**
4. What was David's occupation before he became king? Tentmaker / Blacksmith / Fisherman / **Shepherd**
5. Who was NOT a wife of David? Abigail / Michal / **Rebekah** / Bathsheba
6. What instrument did David play for Saul? **Harp** / Flute / Trumpet / Harpsichord
7. What weapon did David use to kill Goliath? Pea shooter / Spear / Bow and arrow / **Sling and stone**
8. Who was David's great friend? Naboth / Abner / **Jonathan** / Daniel
9. How long did David reign as King? **40 years** / 35 years / 45 years / 38 years
10. Which of David's descendants will reign for ever? Joseph / Hezekiah / **Jesus** / Solomon
11. Which book records many of the songs/hymns of David? Job / Ecclesiastes / **Psalms** / Proverbs
12. How old was David when he died? 66 / **70** / 81 / 99

**Say:** David is one of the greatest men in the Old Testament. But as well as being a shepherd, song-writer, giant-killer, king and ancestor of Jesus, he was also a betrayer, liar, adulterer and murderer. Yet despite his many failures, God used him. One of the reasons God was able to use David was because he had a heart for God – in fact Acts 13:22 refers to David as 'a man after my own heart' – and this meant that when he sinned, he came back to God, sought forgiveness and tried to put things right.

## WORD

**Say:** It is believed that David wrote at least 73 of the Psalms. A Psalm is a poem or song lyric which expresses the heart of the author as an expression of worship. By looking at the Psalms of David, we can see he was a man who took time out to connect with God and truthfully express his inner thoughts, feelings and struggles to God.

### Discuss

How easy do you find it to express your thoughts, feelings and struggles...

- i) ...to yourself (eg in your head)?
- ii) ...to others (eg friends, family, cell group, etc.)?
- iii) ...to God?

### Read Psalm 23 together.

#### Psalm 23: A psalm of David (NIV)

- <sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,  
<sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths  
 for his name's sake.

- <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk  
 through the darkest valley,  
 I will fear no evil,  
 for you are with me;  
 your rod and your staff,  
 they comfort me.

- <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
 in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;  
 my cup overflows.

- <sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
 all the days of my life,  
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
 for ever.

### Discuss

- 🗨️ What does David say about God in this Psalm?
- 🗨️ What is David saying about the importance of stopping to rest with God, and what effect does this have? (Verses 2-3)
- 🗨️ What does walking through a 'dark valley' mean? (Verse 4) What does the Psalm say about this?
- 🗨️ David uses the phrase 'dwell in the house of the Lord'. What does it mean to 'dwell'? Do you spend any of your time 'dwelling'?

**Say:** David was a shepherd. In referring to God as a shepherd he was expressing how he felt about God in ways he understood. Sheep are totally dependent on their shepherd for provision, guidance and protection. The sheep totally trust their shepherd and need to be obedient – following the shepherd's voice – for their own good.

## Discuss

Using things that you know about and like doing, how would you refer to God? (For example, if you are into sports you might describe God as a coach or manager, or if you are into cooking that God is like a master chef or recipe book, etc.)

All analogies have strengths and weaknesses. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the analogies you have come up with. (For example, a sports coach or manager might drop a player if they do not perform well, but God never drops us from playing on his team!)

When people write songs, poetry and lyrics they take time and care over every word and phrase, thinking about its meaning and crafting the words to truly express themselves. When we take time out to connect with and worship God it is important to express what's truly on our hearts. Sometimes this is easy to express and sometimes we can't find the words.

- \* In what ways do you most easily express your worship and prayer?
- \* Have you ever tried to create some form of 'art' to express your prayer and worship? (eg writing a song, painting, photography, poetry, composing or playing music, etc).

## WORSHIP

**Say:** We are going to meditate on Psalm 139, another of David's Psalms, as a prayer and act of worship. Meditating on Scripture or Lectio Divina is a traditional practice of reading some verses from the Bible, meditating on them and praying, and it is intended to help the reader to connect with God.

You are invited to read Psalm 139 over and over in your head, asking God to speak to you. There might be one word or phrase that stands out to you. In that case, listen to what God is saying. Focus on that phrase, reading it again and again, allowing God to speak to you. As we said last week, some of you will find this easy and God will speak clearly, but others might find it trickier to focus or hear from God, and that is OK – but please give it a go, persevere for the whole time and respect others around you!

(Allow about 3-5 minutes for this meditative exercise. You may choose to discuss how the group found it afterwards, but this is up to you as the leader. You may choose to verbalise a prayer to conclude.)

## WITNESS

### Activity

David expressed his worship through writing Psalms. Spend some time creating some 'art' to express your thoughts and feelings towards God. This could be drawings or paintings, music or songs, poetry or rap, or anything else creative and artistic. Encourage the group to do this as individuals, since we all have different things we might want to express. As leaders you will know your group and be able to set the parameters to this and provide the space and resources they might need.

After some time has been given to 'creating', come back together and give the option to share the artistic creations with each other.

Invite the group to spend some more time creating art as an expression of worship this week. You could then invite them to share this if they want to – it might be during a Sunday service or on a noticeboard/wall or via social media. This wouldn't be for the purpose of being praised or celebrated themselves, but to encourage and inspire others in their worship.



# PRAYER

## WELCOME

### Game

Secretly give everyone a number. The group have to arrange themselves in numerical order by communicating with each other without speaking or holding up fingers. They might make up their own sub-language or sign-language and it is often pretty amusing. After they have completed this, you can then get them to arrange themselves in age order, or in order of the month they were born.

**Say:** Today's session is about prayer. Prayer is simply communication between us and God. Unlike the game we have just played, we don't have any restrictions on how we communicate with God or how God might choose to communicate with us. We could focus on the topic of 'prayer' for many weeks, but today we are going to specifically look at remembering to 'stop' and pray.

### Discuss

- 🗨️ What comes into your mind when you hear the word 'prayer'?
- 🗨️ Is prayer boring?
- 🗨️ Can anyone share a story of a time when one of their prayers was answered?

**Say:** Some people enjoy praying as they go through their day, but others need a set space or quiet time to help them focus. However you like to pray, spending time out of the general activity of the day, focusing your mind on God and listening to his voice, is a really helpful habit to get into. Jesus did it. For example, Mark 6:46 says, 'After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.'

### Discuss

- 🗨️ Do you find it easy or hard to take time out to stop and pray?

## WORD

### Activity

Place a large sheet of paper in the middle of the group (eg flipchart paper or a roll of lining paper) and some pens. The group is going to brainstorm/thought-shower 'prayer' using some Bible verses to help them. Print and cut out the Bible verses listed at the end of this session. Invite members of the group to take a verse and read it to the group. (You can also print the Bible references without the verse numbers, and members of the group can look up these verses in the relevant chapter in the Bible – this would help to give the context, eg where in the Bible it is written, who is writing, what happens or what is said before or after the verse(s), etc).

Discuss the verse(s) and invite the group to write down on the paper what they think the verse is teaching or telling us about prayer. It might be helpful to ask if the verse is telling us 'why' we should pray or 'how' we should pray, as well as discussing any other thoughts, questions or ideas about the topic of prayer. (The group might not get through all the verses in the time given, or as leaders you might want to pre-choose the ones that you think will be most helpful for your group.)

### Discuss

- 🗨️ What have you learnt about prayer by doing this?
- 🗨️ How might this change how you pray or how you think about prayer?



## WORSHIP

**Say:** Although prayer can (and should) be done from any bodily position, the Bible notes five specific postures for prayer

- \* **Sitting:** 2 Samuel 7:18 – Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: ‘Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?’
- \* **Standing:** Mark 11:25 – And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.
- \* **Kneeling:** Daniel 6:10 – Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. (See also Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60; 9:40; 20:36; 21:5; Ephesians 3:14.)
- \* **With one’s face to the ground:** Matthew 26:39 – Going a little farther, he [Jesus] fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’ (See also Mark 14:35.)
- \* **With hands lifted up:** 1 Timothy 2:8 – Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

### Discuss

- 🗨️ Can you think of any other prayer positions? (You might want to discuss how other cultures and religions meditate and pray – eg prayer mats, Buddhist meditation, prayer labyrinths/mazes, yoga, etc.)
- 🗨️ What difference do you think your physical position makes to praying?
- 🗨️ What physical position do you normally pray in?

**Say:** As our time of worship this week we are going to spend some time doing a prayer meditation which requires us to move into different prayer positions. You will probably feel self-conscious or might get the giggles doing this – that’s OK. But try and use this time to focus on God rather than worrying what you (or what everyone else) looks like!

(You can try getting the group to try out the different positions before doing the meditation to get some of the laughter and awkwardness out the way! The positions are: standing, walking, kneeling, lying face down and standing with hands in the air.)

### Meditation

*Standing:* As you stand, you recognise that Jesus is standing in front of you.

How do you greet him? What does he say to you?

(Pause)

*Lying face down:* In Matthew 26:39, Jesus fell face down to the floor in prayer and said to his Father: ‘Not my will but yours.’ As you lay face down, think about what areas of life you need to submit to God, and accept not your will, but his.

(Pause)

*Walking around:* Jesus invites you to stand and suggests you go on a walk together – you start walking. Where do you imagine you are walking? What does he show you?


(Pause)

*Kneeling:* Jesus asks you what situations are worrying you at the moment. He invites you to kneel next to him as you pray together about these things.

(Pause)

*Hands in the air:* You stand next to Jesus, you raise your hands to the heavens and you say out loud the prayer Jesus taught his disciples – ‘Our Father...’

Amen

 **Discuss:** How did you find that experience? What stood out to you?

## WITNESS

**Say:** Praying on behalf of others is called intercessory prayer.

### Activity

Invite the members of the group each to think of five people that they would like to pray for and to write down the names (or specific descriptions). Share these with each other if appropriate, but make this optional in case there are situations that the young people do not want to share with the wider group.

**Say:** The challenge this week is to pray for these five people each day, but trying a different way of praying each day. For example:

**Day one:** Praying whilst kneeling

**Day two:** Praying whilst walking




**Day three:** Praying whilst lying face down

**Day four:** Praying by writing or drawing

**Day five:** Praying out loud (you might find it helpful go somewhere where people can't hear you – unless you feel that you want to pray out loud on the bus!)

**Say:** After you have prayed each day, take a few moments to think about how helpful you found that way of praying for facilitating your communication with God.

### Discuss

-  What ways might you try praying this week?
-  How can we help or encourage each other in our praying this week?
-  Do you think it would be good to tell the people that you are praying for that you are praying for them? Why or why not?

Pray together to end the session

<b>1 John 5:14</b>	This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.
<b>2 Chronicles 7:14</b>	If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.
<b>Ephesians 6:18</b>	And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.
<b>Jerimiah 29:12</b>	Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.
<b>John 17:15</b>	My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.
<b>James 5:13</b>	Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.
<b>Mark 11:24</b>	Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.
<b>Matthew 5:44</b>	But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
<b>Matthew 6:7</b>	And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.
<b>Matthew 26:41</b>	Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
<b>Psalms 102:17</b>	He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea.
<b>Romans 12:12</b>	Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
<b>Mark 6:46</b>	After leaving them, he [Jesus] went up on a mountainside to pray.
<b>Psalms 145:18</b>	The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

<b>1 John 5:14</b>	This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.
<b>Luke 22:46</b>	‘Why are you sleeping?’ he [Jesus] asked them. ‘Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.’
<b>Acts 21:5</b>	When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray.
<b>Philippians 1:4</b>	In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.
<b>Luke 11:2-4</b>	He [Jesus] said to them, ‘When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”’
<b>Luke 6:12</b>	One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.
<b>Luke 18:1</b>	Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.
<b>Romans 8:26</b>	In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.
<b>Philippians 4:6</b>	Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
<b>Colossians 4:2</b>	Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.
<b>James 5:16</b>	Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.
<b>1 John 1:9</b>	If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
<b>1 Timothy 2:1</b>	I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people.
<b>1 Thessalonians 5:17</b>	Pray continually...

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

## WELCOME

You might like to start this session by discussing how the witness activity of praying for people has gone since the last Cell group.

### Activity

Provide some sugary doughnuts and challenge members of the group to eat a doughnut without licking their lips.

**Say:** This game takes quite a lot of focus and discipline. Ultimately this is only a game – but there are some spiritual disciplines which can help us to focus, and to deepen and strengthen our relationships with God.

### Discuss

🗣️ What comes to mind when you hear the phrase 'spiritual discipline'?

**Say:** Often people have to be disciplined to get better at something. Many people who excel at something will have practised and trained for hours from a young age to perfect their skills. Think about your favourite sports stars or musicians and how many hours of disciplined work and sacrifice have been needed to enable them to do what they do. In the same way, practising some spiritual disciplines helps us to develop our relationship with God.

## WORD

(NB – The notes below look at the 12 spiritual disciplines which Richard Foster explores in his book *Celebration of Discipline*. This may be too many for one session in your setting, so you may wish to choose how many to look at and which ones will be most helpful, or you could spread this teaching over a couple of sessions or more.)

**Say:** A good book which explores the topic of spiritual disciplines is Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline* (it's recommended that leaders get hold of a copy to read or refer to). In this book Foster looks at four inward disciplines, four outward disciplines and four corporate disciplines. Today we are briefly going to look at the four inward and four outward spiritual disciplines, then try practising some of the corporate disciplines in our worship and witness this week. We will look at some key verses from the Bible and explore what these disciplines are about. If your group member are interested to explore any of these spiritual disciplines further, why not start by getting hold of copies of the book?

### Activity

Print and cut out a few copies of the table at the end of this session. Ask the Cell group members to match up the spiritual discipline to the description and then sort them into inward, outward and corporate disciplines. (In reality some of these disciplines can fit under more than one heading. It is more about getting the Cell group thinking and discussing.)

The following few pages contain key Bible verses and some questions relating to the inward and outward disciplines. These can be used as needed, as you do the sorting activity during the 'Word' section of the session.

## Inward Disciplines

**Meditation...** *stopping to focus on God's voice.*

*Key Bible verses*

**'Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.'**

Joshua 1:8

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May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.'

Psalm 19:14

'He says, "Be still, and know that I am God."'

Psalm 46:10

- 🗨️ What are some of the things that make your life crowded?
- 🗨️ Do you want to hear God's voice? How can you make space to get rid of some of the clutter and noise that might stop you from hearing him?

**Prayer...** *communication with God which allows him to change us.*

Key Bible verses

<sup>5</sup> 'And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup> 'This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.”

<sup>14</sup> 'For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.'

Matthew 6:5-15

- 🗨️ How has or does prayer change you?
- 🗨️ Which ways of praying do you find easiest and hardest?
- 🗨️ Do you ever feel 'not in the mood' to pray or that you just 'don't have time'? What could you do if this is the case?
- 🗨️ Can anyone share a story of when one of their prayers has been answered?

**Fasting...** *abstaining from something to focus on God and remind ourselves that it is God who sustains us and provides all we need.*

NB: Please be sensitive of anyone within the group with an eating disorder when exploring this topic.

Key Bible verses

'When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.'

Matthew 6:16-18

SESSION  
FOUR

- 🗨 Have you ever fasted from something? How did you find it?
- 🗨 In the verses above, Jesus says 'when' you fast, not 'if' you fast. Does this mean that all Christians should fast?
- 🗨 What is the purpose of fasting? Is it simply a challenge? Or a lifestyle choice? Or to help us to rely on and connect with God?
- 🗨 Fasting in the Bible focuses on food. What other things could you try fasting from?
- 🗨 How can fasting show you what controls your life?

Study... taking time to look into something more deeply to enable us to learn and develop in some way. This could be a book or idea, Scripture, or a physical object such as a flower.

*Key Bible verse*

**'Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."'**

**Matthew 22:37**

Richard Foster suggests there are four steps to studying: repetition, concentration, comprehension and reflection.

- 🗨 How do you best learn things?

### Activity

Bring in a flower or plant. Ask the group to 'study' it for about five minutes. What did they learn or discover about it?

- 🗨 What study tools/aids can help you to study and learn more about who God is? (eg, the Bible, a good commentary, books, websites, sermons, cell group, etc.)

### Outward Disciplines

**Simplicity...** *choosing to focus on less to recognise that Jesus is all we need.*

*Key Bible verses*

<sup>19</sup> 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

<sup>22</sup> 'The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

<sup>23</sup> But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

<sup>24</sup> 'No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.'

**Matthew 6:19-24**

- 🗨 What do these verses say about our possessions?
- 🗨 Do you believe that what you have is a gift from God?
- 🗨 The song 'Blessed be your name' (by Matt and Beth Redman) contains the line 'You give and take away'. What does this mean and how do you feel about that? Does this scare you or give you freedom because you don't have to worry?
- 🗨 Do you make what you have (what God has given you) available to others?



SESSION  
FOUR

**Solitude...** *being alone in your own thoughts. This normally involves silence and being 'away' from things that distract.*

Key Bible verses

'One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.'

Luke 6:12

'Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone.'

Matthew 14:22-23

- 🗨 Do you like being by yourself in solitude and quietness? Why? Why not?
- 🗨 What distracts you from experiencing 'solitude'?
- 🗨 What opportunities do you have for small snippets of solitude in your life? (eg just as you wake up / go to bed, walking somewhere, on a lunch break, etc.)

**Submission...** *the discipline of not needing to get our own way. To allow God to have complete control.*

Key Bible verses

'Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death –  
even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.'

Philippians 2:1-11

- 🗨 What do you think when you hear the word 'submission'?
- 🗨 What or who do you find it easy to submit to?
- 🗨 What or who do you find it hard to submit to?
- 🗨 How could the spiritual discipline of submission be used to abuse others?

**Service...** *doing something or being available for someone out of unselfish motives.*

Key Bible verses

**'Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.'**

**John 13:14-15**

- 🗨️ How easy do you find it to do something for someone else?
- 🗨️ How do you think serving someone helps you to go spiritually deeper with God?
- 🗨️ Service helps us to develop humility. What does humility look like?
- 🗨️ Thinking back to the story of Mary and Martha – what is the danger with practising service?

**WORSHIP**

**Say:** One of the four corporate spiritual disciplines that Richard Foster suggests helps further our relationship with God, is worship – our response to a revelation of God's love. Some days we find it easy to worship, but on other occasions it is more difficult. We are going to listen to the song, 'Blessed be your name' by Beth and Matt Redman which encourages us to worship in the good times and in the hard times. Whatever you feel like today, and in the coming days this week, try and choose to worship God anyway.

Play a recording of 'Blessed be your name'. As you listen, invite the group to reflect on God's love for them and their response to this.

**Say:** Another corporate spiritual discipline is confession. Confession seems a strange discipline to be under the 'corporate' heading. Confession can be both a private matter between you and God and a corporate discipline. James 5:16 says, 'Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other.' We are not going to ask you to confess your sins to the whole group, unless you feel you want to. However, you might want to ask the group to pray for them to help develop and deepen their relationship with God (eg help to get into better prayer habits, help to improve their thought life, help to not gossip or get angry, etc).

Share and pray for each other. (It sometimes helps if the leaders also share things so the young people can pray for them too.)

**Say:** The penultimate corporate spiritual discipline Foster talks about in his book is guidance – hearing God's voice and obeying him.

**Activity**

To conclude this time of worship, invite the group to silently pray for, and listen to God's voice for, the person on their left, asking God to give them a word of encouragement that they can share with that person. After a few minutes of silence, invite the group to share their words of encouragement. (If anyone struggled to hear a word from God to share, reassure them that that is OK – maybe God will give that person guidance and encouragement in some other way, but their prayers for that person are never wasted!)

**WITNESS**

**Say:** The final spiritual discipline in Richard Foster's list is celebration – enjoying being in relationship with God.

**Discuss**

- 🗨️ In what ways do you enjoy your relationship with God?
- 🗨️ Does God want us to feel guilty if we are not very good at practising spiritual disciplines? (eg if we don't pray every day, study our Bibles as much as we think we should, or don't fast, etc.)

### Activity

Today's session could potentially be quite long and intense. Think about your group and what they enjoy doing. Could you finish your time together in celebration, enjoying being in the presence of God and each other? It might be singing, it might be a game they like to play, or it could just be eating more doughnuts together – whatever it is, have some fun together!

### Challenge

Invite the group to take time this week to STOP and to do something that they enjoy doing. As they do it, prompt them to remember the words of Jesus: 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10).

Finish the session by praying to thank God for his love and thank him that his love does not depend on how much we practise spiritual disciplines!

*NB if you are looking for further material on spiritual disciplines, then refer back to Series Seven and Series Eight of the 2017 Cell material which can be found here – [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/resources-youth-ministry](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/resources-youth-ministry)*

<b>Meditation</b>	...stopping to focus on God's voice.
<b>Prayer</b>	...communication with God which allows him to change us.
<b>Fasting</b>	...abstaining from something to focus on God and remind ourselves that it is God who sustains us and provides all we need.
<b>Study</b>	...taking time to look into something more deeply to enable us to learn and develop in some way. This could be a book or idea, Scripture, or a physical object such as a flower.
<b>Simplicity</b>	...choosing to focus on less, to recognise that Jesus is all we need.
<b>Solitude</b>	...being alone in your own thoughts. This normally involves silence and being 'away' from things that distract.
<b>Submission</b>	...the discipline of not needing to get our own way, to allow God to have complete control.
<b>Service</b>	... doing something or being available for someone out of unselfish motives.
<b>Confession</b>	...sharing our failures with God and others so that we can experience forgiveness and grace.
<b>Worship</b>	...our response to a revelation of God's love.
<b>Guidance</b>	...hearing God's voice and obeying his word.
<b>Celebration</b>	...enjoying being in relationship with God.