

Reflection Time at the End of a Staff Week

Instead of new input on the last morning, the staff week of the Ukrainian movement (2021) ended with a time of prayerful reflection.

Each person was given a (larger) envelope with the following two pages glued one on each side of the envelope. Inside the envelope, there were around ten yellow and ten green slips of paper to write on. The amount of paper slips was intentionally limited in number to help staff prayerfully reflect on what was meaningful; the idea was not to try and be complete and write down lots of things. This was stressed in the introduction.

After around one hour of personal silence, the group met again. Everyone was asked to walk around and as they met another person simply to say what name they gave to God as they looked back on the staff week. And then to move on to the next person, always meeting in pairs and sharing just this one thing. (The name could be a description, e.g. You are the God who creates new fellowship; You are my Comforter...) It was a powerful and simple way of sharing and honouring God.

We ended the reflection time in this way. It would also be possible to then move on into a time of sharing as a whole group e.g. asking: What good gift from God did you receive this week... an experience, a word from Scripture, a new perspective on your life or ministry...?

And now let these words to invite you into this time of reflection:

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for fish, will give him a snake? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:7-11)

Jesus tells us that God is our Father who loves to give good gifts! He invites us to come asking for his good gifts – expecting to be heard, expecting a life-giving response. Ask and it will be given to you. Sometimes it is hard for us to trust God because this does not always seem to be our experience. God can seem silent or harsh. And yet, if he adopted us as his children, will he not always seek to give us what is good for us?

Ask! Seek! Knock! An invitation to come to our heavenly Father acknowledging our dependence on him and his goodness. We want to spend time doing this as we prayerfully reflect on our lives and this past week.

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Find a quiet place and settle down. Spend a moment in silence and become aware that Jesus is present with you. (5 min)

Read these words of Jesus slowly (Matthew 7:7-11):

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for fish, will give him a snake? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Remember how God answered some of your prayers in the past three months (including this week). Use the yellow slips of paper in this envelope to write down how you saw God at work. Thank him. (10-15 min)

Based on what you have been hearing this week, what do you want to ask of your heavenly Father? Prayerfully reflect on this question and then use the green slips of paper to write down your answer. (10-15 min)

Look over what you have written. What are the two (or maximum three) requests that are most important to you? Write a short prayer in the space provided here based on these 2-3 requests. You might want to pray this prayer repeatedly in the next weeks. (10-15 min)



Give a name to God based on how you experienced him this week. (5 min)

For retreat material, see:

www.scriptureengagement.ifesworld.org
– resources - retreats