

Sunday 21st June – Soul Training

This week I'd like to encourage you in the balance of contemplation and action, piety (reverence) and mercy, personal devotion and service. It is helpful to keep a balance of spending time with God and caring for others, a balance of listening to the Holy Spirit and doing, a balance of rest, reflection and rejuvenation and serving.

Being inspired by Catherine of Genoa let's commit to two things this week:

1. Spend two hours focused on God
2. Do four intentional acts of kindness or service for others

Two Hours with God

Some of you will think easy... is that all? Can I do more?! And some will be daunted. By all means spend more time with God but let's all aim for two hours this week. It doesn't need to be in one sitting – maybe 4 x 30 minute intervals would be more manageable.

Suggestions:

- Find a quiet, restful place to be alone
- Breathe – take time to be present where you are. Pay attention to your breaths and let your body and mind relax and find calmness. Listen to worship music.
- Say a prayer – maybe start with The Lords Prayer or pray from your heart.
- Praise – make a list of everything you are thankful for and then thank God for them
- Read reflectively – Read some Bible passages – perhaps from the Psalms or Gospels is a good place to start.
- Ponder – spend time thinking about what you have just read. Is there a message in there for you? What might God be saying to you in the passage?
- Ask & Listen – Speak to God directly. Ask God any questions you may have. You may not get an audible answer. It can take time and practise to learn to discern the still, small voice of God. Sometime God speaks in a quiet inner voice and sometimes through a series of thoughts. The key is to open your heart and mind to God.
- Journal – It is helpful to write down your thoughts and feelings during these times with God. Jot down the verses you read and what you feel God is saying to you. It helps you learn to discern his voice as you can go back and read it later, then you can usually tell if it was a God thought or not after some time has past.

Four Acts of Kindness/Service

It is good to stretch ourselves to be unselfish and give unexpected kindness or generosity to those around us. Yet it can also include other things like choosing not to buy something we do not need – steering our hearts away from greed, materialism and excess. We can choose to treat people with dignity, respect and honour no matter who they are. We can choose to slow down and avoid rushing and being busy like the busy culture our world seems to praise often.

There's many ways to show unselfish acts of kindness to those around us and I'd love to hear what creative things you find yourself doing this week. Some examples though can be:

- Cook/buy someone a meal
- Take someone's car to the car wash or wash it yourself
- Take someone out for coffee and be intentional to listen and talk about their life.
- Clean up the house without being asked.
- Mow someone's lawn
- Pay for the person behind you in the drive-thru
- Purchase from a small business that maybe struggling
- Let others go ahead in a line