

Meditation: part 2

The Day Alone: Part 2

Discussion Question:

1. Should we pray for other people? If so, why?
2. Have you ever said you'd pray for someone and you didn't do it? Why did that happen?
3. What does it mean when Christians say we are part of one Body?

What is mediation?

1. *"The period of personal meditation is to be devoted to the Scriptures, private prayer, and intercession, and it has no other purpose... it lets us be alone with the Word." (Bonhoeffer p. 81)*
2. A time to seek God and allow Scripture to become deeply rooted in our thoughts.

Meditation and Scripture

1. The best way to pray is with Scripture
 - a. *"The most promising method of prayer is to allow oneself to be guided by the word of the Scriptures, to pray on the basis of a word of Scripture. In this way we shall not become the victims of our own emptiness. Prayer means nothing else but the readiness and willingness to receive and appropriate the Word, and, what is more, to accept it in one's personal situation, particular tasks, decisions, sins, and temptations." (p. 84-85)*

Intercession is a major part of meditation

Intercession is praying for others. It's easy to pray for our friends and those people we like, but the call of a Christian is to love even those who we hate or hate us, including those who are our spiritual brothers and sisters.

"A Christian fellowship lives and exists by the intercession of its members for one another, or it collapses." (p. 86)

Intercession reminds us of being equal with those who frustrate us.

1. *"I can no longer condemn or hate a brother for whom I pray, no matter how much trouble he causes me. His face, that hitherto may have been strange and intolerable to me, is transformed in intercession into the countenance of a brother for whom Christ died, the face of a forgiven sinner... There is no dislike, no personal tension, no estrangement that cannot be overcome by intercession as far as our side of it is concerned. Intercessory prayer is the purifying bath into which the individual and the fellowship must enter every day." (p. 86)*
2. *"Intercession means no more than to bring our brother into the presence of God, to see him under the Cross of Jesus as a poor human being and sinner in need of grace. Then everything in him that repels us falls away; we see him in all his destitution and need.*

- His need and his sin become so heavy and oppressive that we feel them as our own, and we can do nothing else but pray.” (p. 86)*
3. *“To make intercession means to grant our brother the same right that we have received, namely, to stand before Christ and share in his mercy. This makes it clear that intercession is also a daily service we owe to God and our brother. He who denies his neighbor the service of praying for him denies him the service of a Christian.” (p.86-87)*

The more specific the intercession the better

1. *“Intercession is not general and vague but very concrete: a matter of definite persons and definite difficulties and therefore of definite petitions. The more definite my intercession becomes, the more promising it is.” (p. 87)*

Meditation and the Body

Meditation helps us focus on God and His Word, which speaks to us.

1. *“In our meditation we ponder the chosen text on the strength of the promise that it has something utterly personal to say to us for this day and for our Christian life, that it is not only God’s Word for the Church, but also God’s Word for us individually. We expose ourselves to the specific word until it addresses us personally. And when we do this, we are doing no more than the simplest untutored Christian does every day; we read God’s Word as God’s Word for us.” (p.82)*
2. *“[Meditation] lets us be alone with the Word. And in so doing it gives us solid ground on which to stand and clear directions as to the steps we must take.” (p. 81)*

When we know how God is speaking to us, it will help us love our community and not work towards its destruction

1. *“The individual must realize that his hours of aloneness react upon the community. In his solitude he can sunder and besmirch the fellowship, or he can strengthen and hallow it. Every act of self-control of the Christian is also a service to the fellowship.” (p. 88-89)*
2. *“On the other hand, there is no sin in thought, word or deed, no matter how personal or secret, that does not inflict injury upon the whole fellowship. We are members of a body, not only when we choose to be, but in our whole existence. Every member serves the whole body, either to its health or to its destruction. This is no mere theory; it is a spiritual reality.” (p. 89)*
3. *“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26–27 ESV)*

So for the betterment of the entire Body, meditate.

1. *“Since meditation on the Scriptures, prayer, and intercession are a service we owe and because the grace of God is found in this service, we should train ourselves to set apart a regular hour for it, as we do for every other service we perform.” (p. 87)*

2. *“Even if initially meditation means nothing, [except] that we are performing a service that we owe to God, it would still be sufficient.” (p. 81)*

Reflection Questions:

1. Is there someone who has wronged you? Or is there someone you have wronged? How can you be reconciled with him/her and intercede for each other?
2. What are practical steps you can take to make meditation a regular part of your life, for your own spiritual life and for the health of the Body?