

## SACRED SPACE II

"Be still and know that I am God".

Lord, may your spirit guide me to seek  
Your Loving presence more and more.  
For it is there I find rest and refreshment from this busy world. Amen

Let me begin this week with a question, how much do you want an encounter with God? How badly do you need to spend time with God not only on a Sunday morning, but at times during the week?

*"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."* We heard this a couple of weeks ago when I spoke about the message of hope from the prophet Jeremiah (29:13)

How often are we honest with ourselves, our true selves, about our need for God?

It's fair to say that you will get out of any time you spend with God far more than you anticipated. But you have to make an effort!

On the surface level we could be saying to ourselves, well, I've only got five minutes and then I need to get on with my day, I have work to do, shopping to do, children to look after, meetings to attend. What I am asking you to connect with is the 'you' at a deeper level, the one you protect from the world, the authentic you.

Phillip Sheldrake writes this: *"The more authentic our desires, the more they touch upon our identities and also upon the reality of God at the heart of our being. Our most authentic desires spring ultimately from the deep inner wells where the longing for God runs freely."* Phillip Sheldrake, 'Befriending our desires'

### **Where do we start?**

Each of us has to be *intentional* about setting aside time with God. It requires discipline and awareness to create sacred spaces to connect with God and your true self, from which to be sent out into the world to serve God's mission of restoration and reconciliation as disciples and apostles of Jesus.

### **How do we create our own "Sacred Space"?**

As people of faith today, it is important to set aside a space in your home or room where you can come before God in prayer, explore the questions that may arise in your life, and spend time reading scripture in meditation or silence. Your sacred space should be a place where you can strengthen your relationship with God and find strength for yourself.

Find a peaceful and uncluttered area in your home or a corner in your room. It should be a place that allow you to relax, and where you won't be interrupted by someone entering or leaving a room. Sometimes it will be a favourite armchair, perhaps as a special corner where you might have an icon or a candle or two that you can light as you settle into time with God.

Think about *why* you want a sacred space?

- What needs are you hoping to meet?
- What sort of things are you wanting to do?
- Are you seeking to deepen your spiritual life or enhance your relationship with God?
- Do you need a place where you can lament for things temporarily lost?
- Do you just need a place to have some quiet reflective time during a stressful day?
- Will your space be a place of dreaming or reading?
- Will it be a refuge from all the responsibilities and current distractions around you?
- Is it a place that will help you put aside the fear and uncertainties of the world?
- Is it a place that will provide you with fresh energy and insight into the world?

Take some time to pray and discern what it is you want your sacred space to be for you.

### **What do you do once you have found a “Sacred Space”?**

To get you started, you could explore these apps for your phone, you will see them on a slide in a moment, but please go to our website for the links themselves.

- 1) A well-known one run by the Irish Jesuits, “Sacred Space” <https://www.sacredspace.ie/>

It invites you to take a few minutes of prayer either at your computer or on your phone

- 2) <https://www.pauseapp.com>

Here you can choose whether the pause with God is 1 minute, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, it even comes with a reminder function.

- 3) In French is the AELF app or website

<https://www.aelf.org/>

where you will find prayer for the Hours, beginning with Lauds and finishing with Compline.

- 4) Or the Church of England app and podcast ‘Time to Pray’

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer/time-pray-app-and-podcast>

How about you simply take your Bible and read your way through an entire Gospel.

*Ignatian Prayer* asks us to use our imagination to explore the depths of a gospel story. Consider our own reactions and feelings to a gospel story. Speak directly with God about what delights us and what disturbs us in a gospel story.

It is about God and our relationship to God. If I use distant and remote language to speak of God, then I will imagine that God is distant and remote. If I use only male language to speak to God, I will imagine that God is male. If I use language of humility and love to pray to God, then I will believe in a God who is humble and loving. The God to whom we pray is the God who directs our life; thus our own image of God, the kind of God we believe in, is crucial to the way our journey of prayer proceeds.

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

The point is that you can very simply find time with God wherever you are and when you have a short break between meetings.

*Prayer at its heart is time with God.*

The beauty of being intentional about prayer practice is that once it becomes part of what we do, it soon becomes part of who we are. Like any relationship in which we invest time and energy, the practice of prayer allows us to see and connect with God at levels we never imagined or expected.