



2020 MONTHLY DEVOTION

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Leadership Characteristic: CENTERED AND CENTERING

"For in him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28a)

Read

Acts 17:22-28a

Opening Question for Reflection

In what ways is Christ's presence made known to you in daily life and faith?

Balancing

Living in a culture which might be described at times as 'overworked,' 'overburdened,' 'over-frenzied,' 'overstimulated,' and even 'over-caffeinated,' letting the love of Christ come before all else can feel difficult. Tasks don't often finish themselves. The 'to-do' list is full of good and important items and assignments. Whether it's mentioned explicitly or not, the reality is people rely on you – probably more than you might initially think. Navigating daily life from a place of 'balance,' or 'centeredness,' can seem unattainable. Soon, we might no longer see:

- Our daily work as self-giving (Christlike)
- Our friends and family as central relationships to experience God
- The Church's true identity as being the 'Body of Christ' for the sake of the world
- Our own lives caught up in the mystery and grace of God
- The world, near and far, as deeply loved by the God of the Cross

Receive a few moments wondering in private prayer (or, if with other leaders, discuss together): What might stand in the way of consistently living with active awareness of God's presence? What helps remind you, even in small ways (which aren't really so small, of course!), of God's abiding presence throughout the day?

Paul speaks of his belief in the Gospel in Athens at the Areopagus, a rocky hill near the Parthenon. (What a place to preach!) There's a whole lot of background material to dig deeper. But Paul's message is essentially this – we find our center in God. Consider what Paul shares about God in his proclamation. In only a few words, Paul makes known:

- God creates the world
- God creates everything in the world
- God reigns (is Lord) over all
- God gives life and breath to all things
- God gives time and place for life to be lived
- God desires to be sought after
- God is not far from each person
- Our life, our very being, is already caught up in God

Centering

“Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?” (Psalm 139:7) We can meet God’s presence everywhere. Paul is not bashful in making this truth known at the Areopagus. God calls us to a deeply centered, faith-filled life. And God gives us all we need to live fully – God’s own presence.

To ‘live, move, and have our being’ from the ‘center,’ is to be awake, attentive, and alive to the sacredness of all which might seem ‘ordinary’ – our work, our self, our relationships, our cooking, dealing with finances, greeting strangers, and much more. Christ goes with us ‘amid the pots and pans’ Teresa of Avila taught. Stillness and silence, becoming aware of how God is already holding and embracing our life and world (even our eyesight or voice to read this little devotion!), even a few moments a day, can become vehicles which aid our awareness of God’s life-giving presence.

Questions for Reflection

How would you describe your usual attitude toward the ‘ordinary’ things of daily life?

What might help you continue to cultivate an attitude of reverence and gratitude for the ‘ordinary?’

How might being attentive to the presence of God deepen a desire to accompany, serve, love, and care for ones who suffer or are pushed to the margins of our community and world?

Prayer

Receive a few moments of silence and stillness.

Recognize presently the sacred nature of the people or things around you.

Remember how you are a part of God’s creation living and moving amid the rest of God’s creation.

Holy and Gracious One, you tie us to your own life. Open our hearts to your creative and redemptive movement. Draw us into your ways of peace and reconciling. Allow us to find all of life within us and around us already steeped in your grace. Help us not to overlook you, but to recognize you in all of this day’s activity. Amen.