

Small Group Discussion

Welcome

Describe SONA2018 in one sentence.

Worship

When last were your prayers answered?
How do you give thanks when your prayers are answered?
Thank God for answered prayer in our nation!

Word

1 - Paying Attention

Read Exodus 3:1-4 and reflect on excerpt below from *Without Words* by Frederick Beuchner:
"You never know what may cause them. The sight of the Atlantic Ocean can do it, or a piece of music, or a face you've never seen before. A pair of somebody's old shoes can do it.... You can never be sure. But of this you can be sure. Whenever you find tears in your eyes, especially unexpected tears, it is well to pay the closest attention. They are not only telling you something about the secret of who you are, but more often than not God is speaking to you through them of the mystery of where you have come from and is summoning you to where, if your soul is to be saved, you should go next."

Do you notice the 'burning bushes' that God sends your way?

2 - Honest Conversation

Read Exodus 4:10-13 and Matthew 21:28-31

Do you think it is OK to say "no" to God?
How might saying "no", or arguing as Moses did, help you to be obedient?

3 - Careful Listening

Read Exodus 3:1; 24:15-18

Where did Moses hear God's call?
How many days & nights did Moses spend on the mountain?
If Moses had not spent time in quiet, he wouldn't have heard God's call and we wouldn't have received the law. How can you cultivate the habit of listening more and talking less?

Moses wrote down what he heard. Do you write down what God says to you in (1) prayer, (2) through sermons, (3) at small group meetings?
Do you agree that 'taking notes' IS a sign we taking seriously friendship with God?

4 - Sharing God's Dream

Read Exodus 3:7-10.

In the State of the Nation Address many were inspired when the State President quoted a song by the late Hugh Masikele (lyrics attached) because we all seek a deeper purpose.

God's friends share in a dream more wonderful than any President can express (no matter how inspiring they are). Where is God sending you to share in this dream?

*Lord, be with us all, especially with our leaders, as we all seek to lend a hand to the healing of our land.*¹

Homework

Set two times a day for prayer.

Spend one of those set times listening. Read some scripture. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Ask God to help you understand what that scripture means for you.
Set the other time for your prayers of intercession. Before you come to church next week, or before you go to Bible Study. Take a moment to pray - ask God to help you listen for his voice. And to love the people you meet.

¹ Trevor Hudson, Twitter @trevor040451

Lessons in Friendship & Prayer from the Bible's Famous Friends of God

1 of 6 - Moses, a Friend of God

Further Exercises to Grow in Friendship with God (from *Friendship with God: how God's offer of intimate relationship can change your life*, by Trevor Hudson).

Conversation:

Speak with the Lord about one particular situation going on in your life at the moment. Then stop talking, be quiet for a while and ask yourself, (In the light of what I have come to know about God in the Bible, through the teachings of Jesus in the gospels, through what I have learnt in my faith community and through my own experience of the Divine Friendship over the years, what do I think God might be saying to me about this situation?' You can write this down and think about it a bit more, or speak about it with someone you trust.

Seeing our workplace as mission field:

Each day this week as you do your mission trip to work, see yourself invited to make God's dream more real. Throughout the day invite God into each activity you do. One of the best descriptions of prayer I know of is 'talking with God about what we are doing together'. Make a note of the effects of doing this as you go through your day. Observe what happens in your relationships, in the way you do your work and in the outcomes of your efforts. Bringing our praying and our daily work together in this way helps us to go through the day aware of God's presence with and around us. The results can be supernatural in their effects.

Sharing God's dream:

What have been some of your own personal experiences of pain? How do they connect with the experiences of those around you? What 'human cry' in your community do you hear the loudest? What are your own special gifts and how could you use them to make God's dream become a reality in your local community? As you talk about these responses with your Divine Friend, are there any clues as to what your little piece of God's dream might be?

English Lyrics from Thuma Mina (Send Me).

I wanna be there when the people start to turn it around
When they triumph over poverty
I wanna be there when the people win the battle against AIDS
I wanna lend a hand
I wanna be there for the alcoholic
I wanna be there for the drug addict
I wanna be there for the victims of violence and abuse
I wanna lend a hand
Send me

[Chorus]

Thuma mina (thuma m'na)
Thuma mina (ezizweni)
Ndizoya ndithandaze

I wanna be there when the people win the battle against AIDS
I wanna lend a hand
I wanna be there for the victims of violence and abuse
I wanna lend a hand
Send me