

## **Power Point**

*The Christian life is celebrated in community - belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ - but it is lived by us mainly within our own self. The power to live this new life in Christ does not come from our activity – the things we do for God. The power for living comes from learning to BE on our own by devoting time to be alone with God. Jesus practised this and because of the source of vitality he was able to do the things he did. All our activity is of little use and effect if our lives are not grounded in God.*

*This series looks at a few of the vital basics that we should develop in order to grow in Christ.*

*This series is linked to the Sunday series and each session follows the Sunday when the session is introduced. These notes are for everyone, to use during the series, and to keep for reference afterwards.*

### **Session 1: Meditation**

What do you imagine by the word "meditation"? How would you do it?

In the Bible the word "meditation" is found almost entirely in the Psalms -which are a collection of prayers and songs for individual and corporate devotion.

*Read Psalm 6 3:1-8*

Who is the focus of this meditation? Why?

Where and when might these words have been uttered?

What does meditation involve? v1

In what situations of life is meditation possible?

What is the aim of meditation? vv3-4

At what times of the day and night might meditation be more intimate and beneficial? vv1, 2,6

What happens in our relationship with God when we spend time with him like this? vv 7-8

*Now read the Psalm again and then sit in silence - aware of God -for a few minutes - this is meditation*

*Read Psalm 1:1-3*

This is another insight into what meditation is.

When is it practised? Why?

What is the focus here of the meditation?v2

What is "the law of the Lord"? see Ps 119vv97-104 (and in fact all of this very long psalm!!)

*Read Psalm 77:11-14*

What else is involved when we meditate? See parallel words in Psalm 143:5-6

What have we learnt from all this?

***Meditation is focussing our thoughts on God-it is being in his presence, undisturbed***

***It is preparation for prayer***

### **Session 2: Prayer**

When we take time to be still before God, we come to prayer prepared and not confused and in haste.

Although there are times when we cannot prepare, daily preparation and prayer will equip us for the occasions when we go straight into prayer.

*We will use Jesus' teaching as our guide - read Luke 18:9-14*

Why did these two men choose to pray in a public place of worship?

With what attitude did they enter the building?

What was different about their bearing and their words?

What was the point that Jesus is making?

*Read Matthew 6:5-15*

What is the "reward" for those who make a show with their prayers?

What are the advantages of the advice in v6?

Why are lots of words unnecessary? see Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 and 1 John 5:14-15

Look again at the "Lord's Prayer" and discover how this pattern for praying includes all that we need to ask.

***Prayer is mainly listening to God — few words are necessary on our part***

### **Session 3: Study**

In order to grow in the basics of what God has already said to us, we need to read the Bible. Daily reading will keep us in tune with God, rather like some people always read the same newspaper. There are two basic ways of reading the Bible -just a few verses a day to think about and inspire us, or reading whole chapters or even books at one go to get a wider picture of how God acts in our lives.

*Read Romans 12:2*

How can daily reading of the Bible affect how we think?

Why is our mind so important?

*Read Deuteronomy 11:18-21*

What can we do nowadays to ensure that what we have read in the Bible is remembered in our daily lives?

*Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

Look at each of the four points made in v16 and think about the impact the Bible can have on our lives.

*Read Luke 1:1-4 (and Acts 1:1-2)*

What is the purpose in our reading what Luke wrote?

All the above texts are some of the reasons for studying the Bible through basic reading.

*Now read a short passage 1 John 1:5-10*

What is God saying here? How does it affect us? What should we learn and do?\*

*This is an example of studying a short text. Now read 1 Samuel I (the whole, chapter).*

Ask the same questions\*

*This is an example of reading an extended text and taking in a wider view of how God deals with us.*

***The key to study is to make it a habit, to concentrate as we read, and to understand how we are affected.***

### **Session 4:Fasting**

In the Bible this means abstaining from food (not water)for spiritual purposes. It is a spontaneous act in order to centre on God. It has not value in itself(it is Not dieting!!). Because it is a forgotten spiritual discipline, it is advisable to begin with a half day fast.

*Read these instances of fasting- as you read each one - ask "What is the reason for the fasting? " :*

*Deuteronomy 9:9-11*

*1 Samuel 31:11-13*

*2 Chronicles 20:1-4*

*Esther 4:9-17*

*Psalms 69:10-18*

*Acts 13:1-3*

*Acts 14:21-23*

*Now read Matthew 4:1-11*

Why did Jesus fast? What effect did it have? What was the outcome of his fasting? What did he do afterwards?

*Finally read Matthew 6:16-18.*

What guidelines are there here?

What is the purpose of the fasting?

***Fasting brings to the surface what really controls us in life! focus on God releases his power in us.***