

Centred Discussion Guide



Part 4: The Centred Day

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INTRODUCTION

Please turn off your phone and take your time.

If doing it with others you might like to start with one or two of these questions:

- *What did you want to be when you grew up?*
- *Name a fashion you used to wear that you would never wear now!*

The first core value of our Immanuel is “everything starts with prayer”. Just do it.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE REALLY CENTRED ON?

You can tell what your life is centred on by examining certain things:

- Your thought life
- Your internet history
- Your bank statement
- Your time usage

Is this true? What are your thoughts?

A CENTRED LIFE IS MADE UP OF CENTRED DAYS

Perhaps this is not such a strange time in our world - history is full of this sort of thing. But one day when this starts to blow over we will look back and discover that we learned all sorts of things about ourselves and our culture. Perhaps we will learn to slow down, to listen, to be more grateful, and to centre ourselves?

A centred life begins with centred days. Just change some small things. If you want your life to become more centred on what matters, just start with a day!

Quietly reflect on the words below:

Psalm 118:24

***This is the day that the Lord has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.***

- What did you hear?
- What does it mean to start the day believing this?
- How would starting this way change a person's outlook?

1. START WITH A STOP

"The early morning belongs to the Church of the risen Christ... For Christians the beginning of the day should not be burdened and oppressed with the besetting concerns for the day's work. At the threshold of the new day stands the Lord who made it. Therefore, at the beginning of the day let all distraction and empty talk be

silenced and let the first thought and the first word belong to him to whom our whole life belongs.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together p.41,43.

A disciple is a learner. Everyone is a disciple of something. It's often not what we thought. You will be a disciple (learner) of whatever you put first in the day. So discipline yourself! Start with a stop, a pause, a breath. Don't start with action. Never look at your phone or device first. Never look at the news first. Never check your emails first. Never look at your calendar first. Get the phone or mobile device away from your bedside. Instead start with what you want your day to centre on.

- Discuss: It's that simple. So why is it so hard?
- What ways could you start with a stop?
- What do you do to start with a stop?

Some ideas:

- Pause at the bedside before getting up
- Stop and breathe, do the sign of the cross
- Lock yourself in a cupboard for ten minutes (see Matthew 6:6)
- Read a devotional work
- Say Psalm 118:24
- Say 'in the name of the Father'
- Try a 'morning prayer'

2. REMEMBER THE CROSS

Galatians 6:14-17

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision [religious ritual] counts for anything, nor uncircumcision [no religious ritual], but a new creation. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

- Discuss the Bible reading. What do you notice?
- What are some ways you could remember the cross at the start of the day?
- How do you feel about the practice of doing 'the sign of the cross'?

3. PREVIEW IT IN PRAYER

Just sit and prepare for the day. Sit quietly, and give your day to God. People say to me, "But my life is too busy to pray. My mornings are crazy." Honestly, face yourself and wake up. What you're really saying is, "I am centred on something else." Is it time to get your priorities right?

'Prayer is never a private inner act disconnected from the day-to-day realities. It is rather the interior battlefield where the decisive victory is won before any engagement with the outer world is possible.'

- Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be*, p. 181.

The organisation and distribution of our time will be better for having been rooted in prayer. The temptations which the working day brings with it will be overcome by this break-through to God. Decisions which our work demands will be simpler and easier when they are made, not in the fear of men, but solely in the presence of God.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*. p.71.

- Discuss these quotes!

GROUP ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK

It's a strange time.

Can you commit to each other to make a short call for prayer this week?