

Personal Retreat

Preparing your soul:

Spend a few minutes taking stock of what's occupying your heart and mind this morning as you come before the Lord. Write out what is vying for your attention this morning.

- What of this do you need to set aside and entrust to the Lord, so that you're better able to attend to Him this morning? Prayerfully do that now.
- Is there anything here that might warrant deeper work with the Lord? Bring this to Him and invite His leading you into that deeper work.

Entering in:

Read through Psalm 25 (provided on the last page), slowly and meditatively.

- **PRAISE** – Spend some time praising God for who He is. What characteristics are brought out in this passage? What have you been experiencing recently of His presence, care, instruction, blessing? What in the life of your family and children do you praise God for?
- **CONFESSION** (Ps. 25:1-2) – Where have you fallen short recently, personally? In your parenting? What are you ashamed of having done? Not done? Bring these to the Lord and confess them freely. Once you've confessed what you're aware of, sit quiet for a few minutes and invite The Spirit to reveal sins, failings, weaknesses that are less obvious to you.
- **FORGIVENESS** (Ps. 25:3-11) – Hear and receive the pardon and steadfast love in these verses. Spend time meditating on the freedom from condemnation for your sins, failings and weaknesses listed above. How is this good news for you as a mom? A wife? A co-worker, friend, daughter, etc.?
- **REFLECTION** (Ps. 25:12-13) – Now ask the Lord for His wisdom and instruction of you as you strive to parent the child/ren He's given you. Think back to the 2 trees from last week – the one with good roots that produce good fruit; the other with withered, rotten roots that produce weak, sickly fruit.
 - How has the Lord been speaking to you over these past few weeks about your parenting? What growth or strengthening in the Gospel are you in need of yourself?
 - Take time to bring each child before the Lord. Note your worries/concerns for that child. What do these reveal about the places you're finding it difficult to trust God? What truths of the Gospel is your child needing to grow in? What's the "root work" that's needed?

***** Re-gather with your Small Group at 10:30 am. *****

Small Group Retreat

As you re-gather as a small group, move right into prayer once everyone is present.

Leader, read (or say in your own words) the following to start this time of prayer:

Introduction: We will be taking the next 30 minutes or so to pray together as a group. I will be moving us on to the next section when the time seems right. There can naturally be some awkwardness or self-consciousness about praying in a group. Let's just acknowledge this upfront and remind ourselves that this is okay. There's goodness in speaking to the Lord in the company of others. And as we listen to the prayers of each other, let's let the prayers of others fuel and direct our own. Let's also remember together that silence is okay. It's an opportunity to listen for the Spirit's direction and be aware of needs and desires in our own hearts that we want to bring to the Lord.

*Psalm 25: 14 The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes known to them his covenant.*

This verse reminds us that we have the great gift of friendship with the Lord, when we put our trust in Him. That means we are not alone, in our parenting or in life. As we see elsewhere in Psalm 25, he promises to instruct and equip his people in how to live and how to love him.

PRAISE and THANKSGIVING – *Let's go now to the Lord and express our praise and thanks for our children/families, and His work in their lives.*

INTERCESSION – *Let's pray for our children/families specifically. [Feel free to leave names off and just refer to "my son" or "daughter" or "child" if that would better protect privacy.] As we each pray for a child or situation, let's take a few minutes for others to pray for that child/ situation before moving on.*

To help guide your prayers, consider these questions:

What things from your personal retreat reflections would you like to pray about? Where do you see the need for the Lord's work in your child's life?

- Where does the character of your child need to be strengthened?
- What are the particular virtues of their temperament/personality that need Gospel-Grace to attend to well?
- What temptations/other loves compete for the heart of your child? The heart of your family?
- Is love and worship of Jesus evident in the heart of your child, even if just a little?

IN CLOSING (from Ps. 25: 15, 21) –

Leader, read the following and/or pray your own prayer:

Our eyes are ever toward you Lord. We take courage, for you will pluck our feet out of the net, when we hit difficulty and hardship in our parenting. And you will pluck the feet of our children out of the net, as they learn to turn to you as they grow. May integrity and uprightness preserve us, and our children, as we wait for you. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Psalm 25

1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
2 O my God, in you I trust;
let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.
3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
5 Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.
6 Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!
8 Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
9 He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.
11 For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.
12 Who is the man who fears the LORD?
Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.
13 His soul shall abide in well-being,
and his offspring shall inherit the land.
14 The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes known to them his covenant.
15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.
16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
bring me out of my distresses.
18 Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.
19 Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they hate me.
20 Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!
Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me,
for I wait for you.
22 Redeem Israel, O God,
out of all his troubles.