

## Sacred Place

Pastor's Reflections. October 22. 20

By Major Deborah Coles



For many years I have been using a guided prayer devotional called Sacred Space.

I'm a very fast reader, so I choose to type my responses; this slows me down, and also gives me a record of my prayers over the weeks and months.

The devotion has several 'pages': Presence, Freedom, Consciousness, The Word of God, Conversation.

We begin with "Presence" – acknowledging that whether or not we 'feel' God with us, He is, in fact, God with us, Emmanuel. Noticing Him/choosing to become aware of the Holy Presence is like opening the door to the House of Prayer. A book I have used and loved is Leslie Wetherhead's "A Private House of Prayer", in which we enter various 'rooms' for various types of prayer. Acknowledging that God is with me gets me 'through the door' of the house of prayer.

So we can pray, 'help me to be aware of You, Holy One.'



The next room is 'Freedom'. How amazing that we can be in conversation with God! We are free to talk to Him (or in my case, type!). We don't have to be afraid.

This is the room where we can receive (or receive again) freedom from sin and guilt. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1.9) I think of a washroom, where we 'clean up' before dinner.



The next 'room' is "Consciousness". Just plop down on the couch and let the peace of His Presence fill your emptiness, calm your anxieties, lighten your darkness. This might be a time to review your day. Even the hardest day has something of peace and light. Another time we will spend more time in this 'room'.

Now we're ready to enter the "Reading Room". The Word of God is the Bread of Life, so the reading room is likely the kitchen in our house of prayer. In the Sacred Space site there is usually a very short passage from the Gospels. For October 20, 2020, the text is: Luke 12:35-38

Jesus said to his disciples, "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves."

If you click on "Need inspiration?", you will find a short comment. I like to write my own commentary and then see how 'well' I did according to what the Sacred Space writers chose to share.

So, before I open that commentary, here are my thoughts:

- We need to be ready for Jesus' return.
- We need to be alert (The servants in this parable have the lamps lit, and they open the door 'as soon as He comes and knocks').
- The Master returns and is so pleased with His slaves that He serves THEM a meal.
- The best servants/slaves are ready to serve even in the middle of the night. (Think of a mom with a crying baby.)
- I don't really like to be called a 'slave' - I am OWNED by someone? I'm not free to do my own thing? I don't get PAID?
- But in truth - I am redeemed by the Lamb, therefore, owned (and sadly, the other option is to be owned by the Enemy. I don't have the choice of 'owning' myself. I am NOT free, except to gladly serve Jesus by loving others. And I'm NOT paid... in the usual sense of the word.)

SS Commentary:

- When we work in the Master's service, he will feed and sustain us. He never asks more of us than we are capable of doing.
- There is a condition called acedia. It is a listlessness of the soul which the ancient monks called 'the noonday devil' - a demonic force intent on breaking the monk's spiritual resolve. When life seems overwhelming, and I am paralysed by fear, fatigue and inertia, can I look forward to the end of the day when Jesus brings me to a laden table, sits down beside me and talks with me about what I have been through?

My response. I like that first sentence.

And the 2<sup>nd</sup> point is so very relevant during a pandemic. I find myself feeling paralysed, sometimes. Do you? But then, I see Jesus, coming to share a meal with me. What a lovely, reassuring thought.



Finally, we move to the 'responding room'. Out of the kitchen/dining room, into the living room.

This room is called "Conversation". The suggested prayer:

Jesus, you speak to me through the words of the gospels.  
May I respond to your call today.  
Teach me to recognise your hand at work in my daily living.

Do you have something else to say about the Scripture reading? Would you share it with me?

We have moved from the doorway to the living room, via the kitchen and dining room. Let this fill and satisfy you.

I really enjoy finding a picture to illustrate what I have experienced. Today, the idea that Jesus, my Master, returns to find me alert and ready to serve, and then serves ME dinner, which we enjoy together, is very good food for my soul!

If you have a comment, you can reach me at [Deborah.Coles@salvationarmy.ca](mailto:Deborah.Coles@salvationarmy.ca)  
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