

Praying Our Experiences: An Invitation to Open Our Lives to God

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Questions for review:

1. Just as Mary, “pondered things in her heart”; perhaps for the rest of her life; are you aware of any experiential moments in your life or in the life of those you guide, that are revisited again and again to discover deeper truth? Have your directees shared these with you?
2. Consider the example of Larry and Sue, can you think of a recent example of an experience (mundane or extraordinary/) that impacted your prayer or inspired or impelled spiritual growth?
3. On p38 Brother Joseph Schmidt says that you may not be sensibly aware of resting in the Lord, but that a call & sense of peace may be present in which there are ‘signs of yielding to Gods presence’. What might some of these signs be? How might we help those we guide to recognize them when they occur?
4. What can be gained by revisiting an event/experience-personally? as a group? Family? Church?
5. God loves us unconditionally in whatever condition He finds us. Praying our experiences helps us to honestly discover what our condition is. What are some of the conditions we need to remove in our search for God’s word in our experience and the experience of those we guide?
6. Recall our experience with questionnaires at SpEx in the past. How they helped us ‘jot’ some of these memories and feelings. As a director, when you see a pattern should you point it out to the directee? If so how? What kinds of questions can we to ask to reveal the pattern?
7. Praying through scripture: Recall when a scripture spoke profoundly to an experience in your personal life.
8. Incarnational Prayer: Praying our Humanness – through the “messiness of our fleshiness”. What are some of those human life experiences that are sacred moments?
9. Praying our story. Not necessarily re-writing the narrative to our liking or to paint ourselves or God in a certain light, but unfolding and enfolding our story through with and in God. How do we do this?

10. Being available as we are. Our true/false self. How do we help them discover their false self, recognize it as part of who we are in truth? P84 speaks about the perception of the false self as enemy, how does Brother Joseph Schmidt suggest we dispel this notion?
11. P.90 "...we can be involved in our duties and activities in such a way that we carry with us in our daily life and work the attitude of the publican, implicitly mindful of our weakness and implicitly invoking God's mercy." How might you advise those you guide to pray in this way?
12. P98 says "Those who in retrospect reflect seriously on their good works often come to a self-knowledge that exposes the ambiguity of their motivations." How can we, as directors, encourage those we guide to reflect seriously on their good works to come to expose the ambiguity or their motivations?
13. "Sometimes an experience may startle us into an awareness of brokenness or blessedness." P105 Can you recall such an experience?
14. "To the extent that we deny an experience, however hurtful, we deny God's loving care, which is mysteriously embedded in that experience." In accompanying those we guide through hurtful experiences, what are some ways to help them 'hear what the painful experience has to say'?
15. What was most striking to you in reading this book?