

Leading the Daily Office at *The EH Discipleship Courses*

August 3, 2017

Introduction: You will be faced, on each week of *The EH Spirituality or EH Relationships Course*, with the task of leading a Daily Office. The spiritual practice of silence and stillness is the most difficult part of the Courses for most people. Thus, it is important that you prepare little teachings/coachings for the 1-3 minutes you will have before you actually do the Office. The following list gives topics and themes I use for those 1-3 minutes. The first two are what I always use to begin each Course, using the “[Silence and Stillness card](#)” as a base for them. Of course, you come up with your own to add to my list.

****There is also a YouTube video with my introducing the Daily Office for you to show or to send to people to watch from our YouTube page. We encourage you to send it to people after (or even before) your first week when you meet together. See the video here: <https://youtu.be/huOZFpsviMU>.

1. **Focus – to be with Jesus. Personal Relationship.** *Silence and Stillness Guidelines Card* – (You can download this from the website on the Free Resources page). Read through the 4 Guidelines, focusing on how normal it is that our mind wanders and we find ourselves distracted. This ancient practice of choosing a simple prayer (1-4 words) to help us return to being still before the Lord has been used globally for centuries to help prayers quiet the many distractions that fill our mind so we can focus on being with God.
2. **Focus – to be with Jesus. Personal Relationship (again).** *Silence and Stillness Guidelines Card* – Review the 4 guidelines again and add the 3 goals found on the opposite side of the card: 1) We receive His love; 2) We let go and surrender our will to His will; 3) We open ourselves to hear God speak.
3. **Focus: Be with Jesus. Guilt/Shame.** 95% of us live in shame and guilt when it comes to our prayer life or devotions. (e.g. I don’t pray enough. How does God feel about me? e.g. Disappointed, frustrated, sad, angry). God is delighted that you showed up at all. His love for you – without strings – whether you pray the Offices or not. Delights in you.
4. **Focus: The goal is not to get through the whole Office (the problem of perfectionism vs. grace).** Our goal is to meet Jesus. Give examples: “If you have 5 minutes for the afternoon office, what do you need? Is it to quiet your mind and spirit which is agitated? Do you need silence or the devotional or Scripture? Do whatever will help you connect and abide in Jesus. Savor the 5 minutes and don’t rush through the whole Office. We don’t get extra points from Jesus for getting through it all!

5. **Focus: 10 FAQ's.** The newest editions of each of the Day by Day books have 10 FAQ's in the back. You may want to highlight one or two or read them all, having participants circle which of the FAQ's speak to them the most.
6. **Focus: Talk about rhythms and Compline** which is now in the back of each Day by Day book. Encourage people to end their day with Jesus – even if is just for a few moments. The rhythm of starting and ending each day with Jesus is a powerful way to practice His presence all through the day.
7. **Focus: Growing up and maturing into adults.** The Daily Office, particularly silence and stillness, marks a great shift in our relationship with God. We move from only speaking to God to listening, to a two-way relationship. Imagine being in a relationship with someone where they only talk to you but never listen! A mature relationship with someone requires listening/being with the person and not simply talking. Remember, a major analogy of our relationship with God is marriage.
8. **Focus: A visual picture of resting in the Father's love.** Put up on a Power Point Rembrandt's painting of The Prodigal Son. The Office is a time for us to lean our head against the Father's chest and let His hands and love rest upon us.
9. **Focus: The deepest yearning of our hearts.** We all yearn for love, notice, and acceptance from people. That is God-given and good. But we first are to get that deep need met from God and not, inappropriately, borrow that love from others. God alone can satisfy the deepest yearnings of our heart. During the silence and stillness, we stop and let him love us so as not to borrow from others.
10. **Focus: Distinguish between exterior silence and interior silence.** We can experience interior silence when at the beauty salon, on the bus, driving a car, at a baseball game, or at work. The practice of exterior silence helps us mature into our ability to live in greater interior silence.
11. **Focus: Abiding in Jesus is our goal (John 15).** Our goal with the Offices is not to stop but to practice His presence all through the day, to abide/remain with Jesus, remembering Him all through our days. Most of us live compartmentalized lives, thinking of God only in church, small groups, etc. We are growing muscles to remain in Him, and pray always (Eph. 6:18).
12. **Focus: Prayer is receiving the loving gaze of God on us** (He is pictured as Abba/ Father in Scripture and as a loving mother). e.g. Every day at his lunch break, John would go and sit in an empty church for 15 minutes by himself. One day, a co-worker asked him what he was doing. His reply, "Just hanging out with Jesus."
13. **Focus: Getting in shape.** If you are out of shape physically and try to jog for 30 minutes, you will be exhausted. Why? You are out of shape. Each of us is created by God to have a dimension of our relationship with Him that includes silence and

stillness. The reason we put 2 minutes here to begin and end each Office is to help get you started. You may choose more or less time. This is meant to be a jumpstart to reawaken those dormant muscles. That is why this is so hard initially. But you will find, over time, that it becomes easier with less distractions in your head.