

**17 February 2013 - First Sunday in Lent.**

**Readings:** Deuteronomy 26:1–11; Romans 10:8b–13; Luke 4:1–13.



**INTRO: Closet prayer** – “But thou, **when thou prayest, enter into thy closet**, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:6). First message in *Sacred Ground*, our Lenten series on prayer. Today we look at praying with Jesus at the Centre.



### **I. Closet prayer is PERSONAL.**

Dare I say “intimate”? God wants everyone to **know** him personally.

**Matthew 6:6**, “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and **pray to your Father.**”

**John 14:13-14**, “I will do whatever you ask **in my name**, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything **in my name**, and I will do it.”

**2 Corinthians 5:17**, “Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”



“Who’s your Server?”

Closet prayer means that Jesus, your Saviour is at the centre.



## II. Closet prayer is **PRIVATE**.



### A. Get away.

**Luke 5:16**, “But Jesus often **withdrew** to lonely places and prayed.”

Illus. Valentine’s Day date with Anita. Have “a date” with God.



### B. Get alone.

**Matthew 6:6**, “But when you pray, go into your room, **close the door...**” Have a place free from distractions when you talk with God.



## III. Closet prayer is **PRACTICAL**.



### A. Talk **TO** God.

**1 Peter 5:7**, “Cast **all** your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

**Philippians 4:6**, “Do not be anxious about anything, **but in every situation, by prayer** and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”



## B. Hear FROM God.

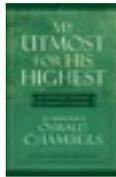
**John 16:12-13**, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, **the Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he **will speak** only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”

**Illus. M. Scott Peck**, *The Road Less Travelled and Beyond*, p. 56-57.



## C. Read Scripture together.

**Exodus 32:13-14**, “Remember your servants **Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self**: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.’” Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.”



## D. Try using a devotional.



## E. Write in a journal.



## F. Begin and end with praise/thanksgiving.

**Philippians 4:6**, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God.”



## G. Follow the Spirit's lead.

**Romans 8:26**, “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but **the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.**”



**CONCLUSION:** Heidi Baker, *Compelled by Love*, “Mother Teresa was frequently asked how she managed to face the overwhelming needs day after day. She said: My secret is very simple: I pray. Through prayer I become one in love with Christ. Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depths of our hearts. Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God’s gift of Himself. Ask and seek and your heart will grow big enough to receive Him as your own.” p. 103. **Deuteronomy 28:13**, “The LORD will make you **the head, not the tail**. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.” It begins in your closet, in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

- Pastor Aldi ☺