

Deeper Still [God's Presence] Discussion Guide

Summary

This sermon explores the importance of spending intentional time with God, using the story of Jesus asking Simon to push his boat away from shore and the account of Mary and Martha. Jonathan emphasizes that while we may say God is our priority, our actions often reveal we're distracted by the busyness of life. Just as a garden needs a gardener's attention to flourish, our spiritual lives require dedicated time with God to grow. The message challenges us to move beyond mere activity for God to authentic relationship with Him.

The sermon highlights that Jesus himself prioritized time alone with the Father, often in the early morning hours. If Jesus needed this connection, how much more do we? Jonathan provides practical steps for developing a consistent time with God: set a specific time, find a quiet space, engage in prayer and scripture, be honest with God, and listen. The ultimate message is that absolutely nothing is more valuable than our relationship with God, and He is inviting us into deeper intimacy with Him through intentional time spent in His presence.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You with grateful hearts, acknowledging that You desire relationship with each of us. As we gather together today, we ask that You open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to set aside the distractions and busyness of our

lives so we can focus on You and Your Word. Lord, we pray that You would speak to us individually and as a group, showing us how to deepen our relationship with You. Give us ears to hear Your invitation and the faith to respond. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one activity or hobby that you always seem to make time for, no matter how busy your schedule gets?

Key Verses

- Luke 5:1-3
- Luke 10:38-42
- 1 Chronicles 16:11
- Psalm 16:11
- John 15:1-5
- Mark 1:35

Questions

- In the story of Mary and Martha, which character do you relate to more and why?
- What are the biggest distractions in your life that keep you from spending time with God?
- Jesus asked Simon to push the boat away from shore, creating space to be alone with Him. What would it look like for you to 'push away from shore' in your daily life?
- Jonathan mentioned that 'you will always make time for the things you want to do.' How does this statement challenge you regarding your time with God?

- What does it mean to 'abide' or 'remain' in Christ according to John 15? How can we practically live this out?
- Jesus prioritized early morning time with the Father. What time of day works best for you to connect with God, and why?
- Share about a time when you felt truly present with God. What made that experience meaningful?
- How can we cultivate a genuine desire to spend time with God rather than seeing it as just another obligation?

Life Application

This week, commit to establishing a consistent daily quiet time with God. Choose a specific time and quiet place where you can meet with Him each day. Use this time for prayer, scripture reading, and listening to God. Start with just 10-15 minutes if you're new to this practice, and focus on being honest with God and creating space to hear His voice. Track your progress and notice how this intentional time impacts the rest of your day.

Key Takeaways

- Spending time with God is not an obligation but a vital aspect of spiritual growth and relationship
- Like a garden needs a gardener's attention, our spiritual lives require intentional nurturing through time with God
- Jesus himself prioritized time alone with the Father, showing us the importance of this practice
- We must choose between being busy for God versus being present with God... presence over performance

- Abiding in Christ means living in continuous, dependent, and intimate relationship with Him... we cannot survive spiritually when disconnected from Him

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the reminder that You desire relationship with each of us. Help us to respond to Your great love by pursuing relationship with You the way You pursue relationship with us. Give us the desire and discipline to spend intentional time with You each day. Help us to understand that we don't just want to abide in You... we have a deep need to abide in You, because apart from You we can do nothing. Transform our hearts so that time with You becomes our greatest joy and priority. Thank You for Your patience with us and Your constant invitation to go deeper. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.