

Hearing the Holy Spirit's Whispers



Creative Reflection I

Kathryn Yaxley

Background

"You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain." Song of Songs 4:12

I love to lead women in learning to hear the gentle whispers of the Holy Spirit within. I've worked alone on this and also in small teams for nearly 20 years. Sometimes this has been through leading mornings of creative reflection and prayer. For some, I witness their first hesitant steps of discovery as a door opens to a new world, whilst I watch others experience deeper encounters with their beloved Lord. Regardless, this ministry is deeply renewing for my own soul.

A few years ago a new friend asked me what I loved to do. I included the leading of mornings of creative reflection in my answer. Somewhere in that conversation it also came out that most of the material I use is my own, as much as anything based on the Bible is! She said, 'You should write your ideas down to share with others. God used that comment and this booklet is the result.

I have discovered that the door to hearing the whispers of the Holy Spirit often opens through times of creative reflection and stillness. It is not easy to find that door in this noise-laden, cluttered world. Yet for all who find this path and open the door, a feast awaits.

I pray God will use this booklet of preparatory notes and reflective exercises to lead you to open that door. As you peek behind the door of stillness and reflection you may find that a glorious rich new world opens, as you encounter more deeply the Holy Spirit's whispers in your own heart. Can you hear Him gently calling you?

"The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling my beautiful one, come with me." Song of Songs 2:13



Kathryn Yaxley
kingdompm1@gmail.com

Contents

Preparation for Reflective Exercises

Our Creative God	3
God Speaks Creatively	4
Are We Listening?.....	5
The Right Environment.....	6
Using the Creative to Open the Door.....	7
Guiding Principles for Listening to God.....	8

Reflective Exercises

In the Hands of the Potter.....	9
Come to the Living Water.....	13
Sitting with the Good Shepherd.....	16
Your Life as a Tree	19
This Treasure in Earthen Vessels.....	23
Come! The Wedding Banquet Awaits	26
Drink from the Well of Life	29
Love Poured Out.....	33
By Quiet Waters	36

Our Creative God

God loves to be creative. One look at what He has made will confirm this; from giant majestic red gums to tiny purple native orchids; from the water dwelling platypus to majestic eagles soaring above; from pristine rainforests to tropical lagoon landscapes. Just look at the variety found in human creation too. No two people are alike, in looks, gifting or personality. God is a God of the creative!

God has created us with five senses, not just one, in order that we may enjoy His creative exuberance to the full. The five senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch engage us and connect us to the world around us. Our sensory experience of the world around us is rich yet how often we take our senses for-granted. How few we employ when it comes to expecting to commune with and enjoy God.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the person who takes refuge in Him." Psalm 34:8

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! ...

Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live." Isaiah 55:1,2b

There is a banquet on offer if we will only step in. Can I encourage you to let go the ways you expect God to meet you and invite His leadership over the journey ahead, as you work through this booklet?

Prayer of Surrender: Thank you Lord, for Your creative beauty mirrored in the world about us. Thank you for making me with senses to engage the world and commune with You. Lord I surrender my senses to You under Your protection and pray that You will use them to show me new ways to commune with You. Help me be open to hear the gentle whispers of the Holy Spirit through my five senses. I pray for Your leadership on the journey to come. In Jesus' name, Amen

God Speaks Creatively

When it comes to God's ways of speaking with and engaging with His world, I wonder how many you can think of.

- Try making a list of the ways that God speaks to, or has spoken, to people. Think about the Old and New Testaments. You might like to jot this down in your notebook.
- What do you notice about this list? Does anything surprise you?
- Which ones of these have you experienced?

I am fascinated that God's creativity shows here too. A study of the Bible shows many different means God has used to share His thoughts with His people, using the different senses. I am surprised by the variety.

Here are just a few:

Dreams	Joseph in Matthew 2:13
Visions	Peter about Cornelius Acts 10:9-23
Messenger	Philip to the Ethiopian Acts 8:30-35
Prophets	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Acts 13:1
Sign	Noah's rainbow Genesis 9:12,13
Inner witness	Paul Acts 16:6,7
Scripture	1 Timothy 3:16
Jesus	Hebrews 1:1,2
Parables	Gospels
Instruction	Gospels and also Exodus
Nature	Psalms 19:1,2 and Romans 1:20
Voice	To Saul on the Damascus Road Acts 9:4,5
Angel	To John, bringing message in the book of Revelation

Prayer to hear God: Thank you Father that You speak in many and various ways. Thank you that You speak to me. Please tune me into hearing You in more and deeper ways. I pray for the Holy Spirit's leadership in this so that my ears, eyes, imagination and spirit are surrendered to commune with You safely and more intimately. Increase my faith to hear You. Thank you in Jesus' name, Amen.

Are We Listening?

I believe God is speaking to us but often we aren't tuned in to hear Him. Each believer has a resident Teacher, the Holy Spirit, whose voice is often just a soft whisper within our hearts. Our expectations can be different or we can be listening to different voices and as a result we can miss His gentle whisper. I am reminded of Elijah who had a big object lesson on Mount Horeb in order to learn this very point.

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. 1 Kings 19:11-13

It's the big and spectacular that strikes our imagination, and where we expect God to be. Often, we are not adept or challenged to listen for His gentle breath, the inner nudge, the sense of knowing or an inner awareness, of God within. Yet it is my experience, that in this gentle mix of nudge, impression and knowing, we first begin to recognise the Holy Spirit's voice. Then as we grow in awareness and dependence on the ways of the Holy Spirit, we may experience other more marked methods of His communication.

So the journey ahead will not be toward the spectacular, but nourishing the gentle life of the Holy Spirit within. Are you willing?

Prayer for the Holy Spirit as Teacher

Father God, Jesus promised the help of the Holy Spirit as my teacher. I am in need of teaching. Please send Him afresh to me and sensitise me to His instructions. Please help me to tune in to my indwelling Teacher and grant me a growing capacity to hear and love His breath, His every inner nudge and direction. Please help me to apply His teaching to my life. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

The Right Environment

Learning to tune in to the Holy Spirit's gentle whispers takes practice. It also helps to create the right environment as you come to these exercises.

- Where do you like to go to commune with God?
- A favourite chair? Outside? Inside? A garden? Church? On your own? With others?

I have found that creating the right environment includes elements of the following :

Quiet and Stillness

Find somewhere free from all interruption, including the mobile phone, where you can pause from the business of life. Dedicate a sacred space for your reflective time with the Lord. A space indoors will be best for these exercises, since equipment is needed.

Time

Allow unhurried time, just as you would enjoy time with a much loved special friend. The time required for each exercise is indicated but if you wish for more, take it. If you need less then that is okay too. The equipment needed for each exercise is indicated at the top of each exercise. Don't forget to assemble the equipment before you begin.

Reflection

Each session engages you in some kind of biblical reflection using one of our five senses. This connects us to the Scriptures and our inner life. It's in reflection that our heart stills and the Holy Spirit's whispers can often be heard. It is a good idea to journal your answers so you can chart your progress next time you do the exercises.

Invitation

The Holy Spirit loves to be invited to attend us, so start your time by asking for the presence of the Holy Spirit to lead and meet with you. Expect that He will. Ask that He would make Himself known to you. Remember, He loves to be invited. Luke 11:9 reminds us to 'Ask and it will be given you.'

Using the Creative to Open the Door

Have you ever noticed how Jesus loved to use topics that provoked clear images in His listeners' minds? A quick flick through the Gospels will show He loved to create word pictures using every day things around him. Sheep, pastures, lost coins, farmers, managers and banquets were some of his subjects.

I am a visual learner. I connect with word pictures and the visual image. Thus writing or drawing and using my imagination are great tools for me to draw near to God and hear the whispers of His voice. I can tune in to God when I do it in a prayerful way.

Others may be more sound-orientated in the way they learn. They will find they tune in to God through sound - by hearing something read, spoken or through music or even hearing themselves express their thoughts to others.

Touch is a sense Jesus also used with His followers. He gave us the elements of bread and wine to regularly touch. Indeed some of us learn best when we use our hands to hold, make or do something. We tune in to God more easily whilst engaged in something hands on.

Others learn by writing or reading. Whether it's a poem or journaling their thoughts, writing down words is their best means of tuning in to God.

All these elements are found at various times in the following exercises. Some will suit you more than others, because they will connect with your personal preference. This does not make them right or wrong. They simply show the diversity with which we are created.

- What is your preferred learning style? Are you orientated to be visual, aural or tactile, or do you value a combination?

Learn what method helps you tune in to God best, then use that to draw near to Him. Are you ready to open the door to the Holy Spirit's whispers?

Guiding Principles for Listening to God

1. Find a quiet undisturbed place. Make this your sacred place with the Lord. Become still.
2. Come in prayer to the Lord committing your time to Him, asking for His protection on this time and confessing any sin that He might show you needs repenting of. [Sin separates us from hearing God's voice.] Ask for the Spirit of God to quiet you and speak to you.

Prayer: Lord, I commit this time to You asking for Your leadership. I pray for Your protection over myself and this time. Cover me by Your grace and show me if there is any sin I need to repent of (pause). Lord, please quiet me so I might hear You in new and restoring ways. Help me to recognise Your voice. Please fill me afresh with the Holy Spirit, expanding me to contain all You have for me at this time. Protect, seal and use all of my senses including my imagination and I place these under Your authority. In Jesus' name, Amen.

3. Sit quietly, expectantly in faith, and enjoy just being with God, working through the exercises.
4. Write down and reflect on any impressions or prompts that you sense. There are many ways God might be whispering to you - inner impressions or witness, a prompt to read a certain Bible verse or passage, through creation, through vision or image, picture, directly as you read and reflect on His Word, through others, through words of a Christian song, through dreams.
5. Always use the Bible as your measure, against which you assess what you sense, knowing the Spirit of the Living God doesn't contradict His own witness in Scripture.
6. Journal your thoughts and share them with a mentor if you wish.
7. Practise giving time to listen to the Lord.

In the Hands of the Potter

*"Yet, O Lord, you are our Father.
We are the clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand."*

Isaiah 64:8



Time
30 minutes

Equipment
Sketch paper, colored pencils, crayons, plasticine or play dough, reflective music and CD player.

Before you Begin
Surrender this time to the Lord now. Turn on the reflective music.

Begin
Take a few moments to quiet yourself. Read and reflect on the verse at the top of the page. Have you seen a potter at work? Think about the wet shapeless clay in skilled hands. Think about the sensitivity of the hands to mould the clay and create something of beauty. Think about the skill to bring the pot to completion. When a pot is finished there is glazing, resting and also firing in a kiln that follows the moulding phase.

Imagine
Take a few moments to settle yourself in your imagination at the wheel of our Heavenly Master Potter. Now imagine yourself as a clay pot that God has made and is still working on. Watch His hands carefully forming you. Imagine the potter's wheel turning.

What kind of pot do you see yourself as?

- Tall or squat?
- Fragile or sturdy?
- Sleek or broken?
- Coloured, patterned, plain?
- Dark or light?
- Being changed from one kind of pot to something more?
- Resting or firing?
- Nearly finished?

Make or Draw

Take about 15 minutes and either:

- Make an image of the pot you see yourself as, fashioning it from plasticine or play dough, OR
- Draw what you see of yourself as the pot, using coloured pencils or crayons

Reflect

Take a few moments quietly to reflect on your creation.

Where is your pot sitting? Are you alone, or side by side with other pots?

How does this make you feel?

Note the base of the pot. Is it broad or narrow, solid or fragile? What do you feel about that?

Do you have handles or not? Do you feel well-loved and used, or somewhat neglected? What do you want to do about this?

Write

Jot down your thoughts in your notebook or journal if you wish.

Reflect

Now think about the Master Potter's hands. The hands that formed you are nail-scarred, a carpenter's hands, familiar with labour. Those same hands helped fling stars into space aeons ago. Yet with infinite care the Master Potter caresses the substance of your life today, forming you into a thing of beauty.

How does this make you feel? Think about those nail scarred hands. Do you trust them to shape you into all you can be?

Pray

What has the Lord spoken about to you through this exercise? Talk to God about your discoveries, asking for His help.

Come to the Living Water

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the Beginning and the End.
To all who are thirsty I will give
to drink without cost
from the spring of the water of life."*

Revelation 21:6 (paraphrase)



Time

30 minutes

Equipment

Bible, notepad, pens, textas, crayons, sketch pad, reflective music and CD player.

I invite you to enjoy some time reflecting on the image of Jesus as Living Water and then simply resting in His presence. Many scriptures make reference to the refreshment Jesus is to us as we turn to Him. This exercise leaves me renewed and I pray it will renew you too.

Before you Begin

Put on some reflective music as background to meditation.

Begin

Commit this time to the Lord and invite Him to meet with you, speak with you and fill you with the Living Water of His presence. Read the following verses in a prayerful attitude. Reread them as often as you wish.

"Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink: even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk. It's all free! Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength! Why pay for food that does you no good! Listen, and I will tell you where to get food that is good for the soul. Come to me with your ears open. Listen, for the life of your soul is at stake. I'm ready to make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the mercies and unfailing love that I promised to David. Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near." Isaiah 55:1-3, 6

"Jesus said, 'But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'" John 4:14

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let all who hear say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let them come; and whoever wishes, let them take the free gift of the water of life." Revelation 22:17

Imagine

Imagination is a great God given tool. Ask God to meet you in your imagination, protecting you in this time and covering you in His care.

Setting the scene: Allow 10-15 minutes for this experience. Imagine yourself drawing near to the Lord. He takes your hand and gently leads you into a scene of renewal. You find yourself gently being led into a green forest scene, where the air is cool and serene. The sound of a waterfall draws your attention. You approach the waterfall and enjoy this quiet place. Here you meet with the Living Water.

Spend time with eyes shut, just resting in His presence before this waterfall, soaking and refreshing yourself in the Living Water.

Draw / Write

When you are ready, you might like to draw what you saw – the waterfall, and surrounds.

OR you may wish to write in your notebook or journal what you experienced.

Reflect

Where are you in regard to this Living Waterfall?

What do you notice about the surroundings?

What were the most significant feelings you experienced?

Did anything surprise you about this time?

When you are tired and thirsty remember, you can spend time with the Lord as our Living Water, at any time.

Pray

Pause and pray, giving thanks for the indwelling, refreshing presence of the Lord.

Sitting with the Good Shepherd

*"I am the Good Shepherd.
I know my sheep and my sheep know me...
I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full."*

John 10:14, 10



Your Life as a Tree

*"I am the vine; you are the branches.
If a person remains in me and I in them,
they will bear much fruit;
apart from me you can do nothing."*

John 15: 5 (paraphrase)



Time

30 minutes

Equipment

Bible, notepad, sketch pad paper if possible, pens, coloured pencils, textas, crayons, reflective music and CD player.

Sheila Pritchard is the author of this reflection on one of my favourite passages of scripture.

Before you Begin

Put on some quiet reflective music in the background if you like.

Begin

Commit your time to the Lord in prayer. You might like to use the prayers on the previous page as you begin.

Spend a little time reading John 15. The image is potent with the connection and dependence that exists between a believer and their Lord. I love how this image portrays Jesus' life, integral and given forth from the vine, imbibed into us, as the branches. What fruit must result! What an effortless picture, if we only apply the abiding lessons.

Draw

Allow 15-20 minutes to draw your life as it is now, as a tree. What shape tree are you? Roots? Trunk? Branches? Fruit?

Are you leafy or bare? Bearing fruit, or in need of pruning?

In other words, what season do you see yourself in?

How healthy is the tree?

Draw what you sense about your tree.

Reflect

When you are finished, look at what you have done.

Has anything surprised you?

What have you learnt about yourself through drawing your tree?

Is this something new?

What else do you notice, admire or identify?

Action

Are there any things about your current circumstances that you might want to address in the light of your drawing? Write down your thoughts in your journal or notebook.

Pray

If you learnt something new about yourself today then thank the Holy Spirit. Spend some time in prayer about your tree.

Thoughts

The first time I did this I was really surprised what I learnt about where I was at. God somehow was in that quiet time of drawing and showed me several things about myself I hadn't been consciously aware of.

This is a great image to use at the end of major seasons in life or in times of transition, to keep us aware of inner things we can sometimes miss.

The Holy Spirit is a creative Spirit who is already flowing with the life of God within each of us who claim the name of Christ. We are not always aware of His loving presence and miss many of the gentle guiding ways that are His hallmark. I believe His interaction with us through quiet reflection such as this, is one of these hallmarks and attunes us to His tender voice already within.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, please help me to become more tuned and aware of your loving, guiding, reassuring and helpful presence within, through the Holy Spirit. Please give me patience as I learn and grant me a love of quiet and stillness too. In Jesus' name, Amen.

This Treasure in Earthen Vessels

*"But we have this treasure
in jars of clay
to show that this all-surpassing power
is from God and not from us."
2 Corinthians 4:7*



Time

30 minutes

Equipment

Bible, pen, journal, a piece of your favorite and most expensive jewellery.
Reflective CD if you wish.

Before you Begin

Assemble the jewellery in front of you and turn on the music. Have your Bible at hand. Come before the Lord committing this time to Him.

Begin

Read the verse at the beginning of this reflection and think about the image of a great treasure hidden away behind an ordinary clay exterior.

It was customary in Jesus' day to conceal treasure in clay jars, which had little value or beauty and did not attract attention to themselves and their precious contents. Here they represent human frailty.

The definition of TREASURE is wealth or riches, something highly prized, regarded as precious and cherished.

Reflect

Pick up your treasured jewellery to remind you that YOU have treasures within you. Reflect on the treasures that are in your 'earthen vessel'.

What are some spiritual treasures you can identify that God has given you? Think about gifts and abilities. (You might like to dig into this chapter in Corinthians or look at the lists of gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 to help you.)

Make a list.

Do you regard your gifts as treasures from God? Do you cherish these gifts? Why or why not?

Do you think your gifts help display 'God's all surpassing power' to others?

Write

Write a short letter to your Heavenly Father telling Him how you feel about the gifts He has given you.

Or you might like to try writing a poem reflecting on the theme of your treasures in a clay jar.

Imagine

The Bible tells us that we are treasure to God. So treasured that He gave His life to redeem us and enjoy a relationship with us. He knows you by name, having paid a great deal for you and you are His personal treasured possession, admired and highly valued by Him.

Now, as you have been holding your treasured jewellery, imagine God holding you and esteeming you as His great treasure. Enjoy this image for 5-10 minutes. How does this make you feel?

What is God saying to you as His treasure? Is there anything about this image you would like to draw?

Pray

Take some time to talk to God about anything on your heart in the light of this exercise. Praise Him for the great treasure He has placed in you.



Come! The Wedding Banquet Awaits

*"He has taken me to the banquet hall,
and his banner over me is love."*

Song of Songs 2:4

*"I saw the Holy city, the new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared as a bride
beautifully dressed for her husband."*

*Come I will show you the bride,
the wife of the Lamb."*

Revelation 21:2,9





You are invited....

*Almighty God,
Father of Jesus Christ, Lamb of God
requests the pleasure of*

.....(you)

*At the Wedding Feast of His Son, the Lamb
and His Bride*

Time

*This momentous occasion will be held promptly at the end of
time in the vast halls of Heaven, Eternity.
However, preparations have already commenced.*

RSVP

In person to Jesus

Dress

*White robes of Jesus' righteousness. These garments have
been purchased at the cross of Calvary and are available to
you, upon acceptance of His gift.*

Suitable Gifts

*Your own life, every day, every minute of it.
Gifts accepted daily prior to the wedding.*

For Further Details

see Revelation 21:2-27,22:17



Time

30 minutes

Equipment

Bible, note pad, pen, CD player and reflective music.

Begin

Commit your time to the Lord of the Banquet, the King of Heaven and ask Him to reveal His love for you through this exercise. Turn on music.

Imagine

Pick up this invitation and write your name in the space provided. Then sit and read.

"The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come!'" Revelation 22:17. The Holy Spirit is calling us and preparing us for such a wedding feast. In the middle of life we can forget this. Take some time with the Lord in prayer, using sanctified imagination, with this image of the wedding feast, bride and groom. Where do your thoughts go? Enjoy this time.

Reflect

Have you ever considered yourself as having received a personal invitation to the Lamb's wedding feast at the end of time? Look up the verses in Revelation. How do they make you feel?

Preparations for a wedding can be extensive. What preparations are you making for attending? Refer to the invitation. Reflect on being part of the Lamb's bride. How does this truth make you feel? Do you think of yourself in these terms? Why or why not? In view of the Spirit's call to come... invite His ministry of refreshing and preparation in those aspects of your life that you wish to submit to Him.

Think about your Lord Jesus as the Groom. Have you ever considered Him from this perspective before? What impacts you as you think about this image? Read Psalm 45.

Pray

Offer yourself to the Lord in the light of this exercise as you are led.

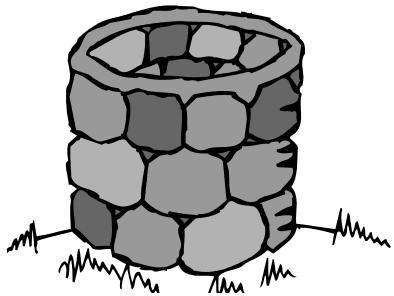
Drink from the Well of Life

Jesus stood and said....

*"If anyone is thirsty,
let them come to me and drink.
Whoever believes in me,
as the Scripture has said,
streams of living water will flow from within them."*

*"By this he meant the Spirit
whom those who believed in him
were later to receive."*

John 7:37



Time

20-30 minutes

Equipment

Bible, notebook, reflective music and CD player.

Begin

Commit your time to the Lord in prayer. Ask the Lord to speak to you as you read John 4:1-26. Reflect especially on this encounter with Jesus from the woman's perspective.

Reflect

I invite you now to think about what it would be like to be the woman at the well. Think about meeting Jesus at the well yourself and what it would be like to hear Him invite YOU to drink, offering you His refreshment as you set aside your burdens.

Read, Rest and Write

The poem over the page may help you reflect on coming to Jesus, the Well of Life. Read it a few times. Then either find a comfortable spot and lie down, with music quietly playing and come to Jesus, your Well of Life, to drink. Invite the Lord to fill you and quench your thirst. Soak in Him and enjoy for 10 minutes.

Or, write your own poem of response to Jesus' invitation to drink from Him. What has God impressed on you through this exercise?

Pray

Thank God for Jesus, that He is our Well of Life. Thank Him for what He has done for you in this time of rest. Ask for the Holy Spirit to keep filling you so that streams of living water might flow through you to others.

Come to Me

The Living Water.....resting.

Resting.

Seated and ready

on a collision with this woman's life,
with every life,
with YOUR life,
with MY life!

Waiting.

Knowing.

Reflecting.

Engaging.....Preparing.

Bridging.....Caring,

Sharing,

Welcoming..... Requesting,

Revealing,

Repairing.....Reaffirming

Trusting,

Inviting.....Declaring.

Restoring.

Come to ME all who are heavy laden and **I WILL GIVE YOU REST!**

For if you drink the water I give, you need never thirst again.

But come. Take off your busy day garments and come.

Take off your routines....and expectations....

and listen!

Take off your constant activity....

and wait!

I AM waiting.

REST.

Cease and come to me.

Come as you are.

Tired.....Challenged

Inadequate..... Ashamed

Disappointed.....But come.

I love and I give

I give rest for your souls.

I AM YOUR REST.

Love Poured Out

*"Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard,
an expensive perfume;
she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet
with her hair.
And the house was filled
with the fragrance of the perfume."*

John 12:3



Time

20-30 minutes

Equipment

Bible, note pad, coloured paper, a bottle of your favourite or most expensive perfume, coloured pencils, textas, crayons, reflective music and CD player.

Before you Begin

Come into the Lord's presence by committing your time to Him in prayer. Put on some reflective music in the background, if you wish.

Begin

Open the bottle of your perfume to let the fragrance waft through the room. Just enjoy it for a moment. Notice how it soon pervades the air. When you are ready, open your Bible to John 12:1-6 and prayerfully read it.

Reflect

Nard was a very expensive liquid perfume, coming from the East. The normal practice was to anoint the head, not the feet, as a sign of honour. In those times alabaster jars of expensive perfumes were part of wedding dowries given as gifts from the bride to the groom. They were a woman's most prized possession.

Mary flouts Jewish convention as hostess by appearing in the presence of men with unbound hair, her love for Jesus stronger than convention. This love sees her pour the equivalent of a year's wages all over Jesus feet. This is about \$40,000 in our terms.

Mary may have just poured her wedding dowry all over Jesus. It provokes an image of her love for the Heavenly Groom, honouring Him and anointing Him, though not for a wedding at this point, but for his burial.

In the light of this information read and reflect again on the verses in John 12:1-6 noting your feelings about her act and the costly nature of what she did.

Imagine

Now take 10 minutes and put yourself into this story in your imagination. Hold the bottle of perfume, close your eyes and imagine that it is you sitting at the feet of Jesus. Draw near to Him in the quiet. Gaze in your heart on Him. How would you express your love to Him?

What are your feelings? What do you want to tell Him? What would you thank Him for? What part of Jesus would you anoint or bless? Simply enjoy Him and express your love to the Lord in your heart. Offer yourself in an act of worship, like a fragrance He might enjoy. Enjoy being with each other.

Draw or Make

When you are ready, you might like to

- Draw the scene you saw as you sat at the feet of Jesus.
- Make a poster of your devotion to Jesus, cutting out shapes and symbols or drawing them, to express your love and to convey the things you value about Him.

Write

If you prefer, write a letter or poem to the Lord expressing your love.

Thoughts

This exercise also works if you imagine Jesus as the Bridegroom and you are sitting at His feet, blessing Him, anointing Him, ready for the wedding of the Lamb to His Bride in the age to come.

By Quiet Waters

*"The Lord is my shepherd.
I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He restores my soul."*

Psalms 23:1-3a



Time

20 minutes

Equipment

Bible, note book, sketch pad, pencils, textas, crayons, CD player and reflective music.

Before you Begin

Commit the time to God in prayer. Ask the God who restores souls to meet you during this time.

Begin

Read Psalm 23 several times. Imagine yourself as the writer of this Psalm and all the promises apply to you.

Imagine

Turn on the music if you wish. Prepare to lie down on the floor and enter into this image of rest, giving yourself 10-15 minutes.

Setting the Scene: Take the Lord's hand in imagination and enter this quiet place where green pasture abounds in a sunny meadow. It's hidden from life as a quiet place of rest. The Lord is here. You can sense Him on the gentle breeze which stirs against your cheek. You can see Him in the beauty of this place especially in the green you see everywhere. But you also sense Him in the quiet brook that lazily meanders through the meadow and you see Him in the pond before you. Lie on the grass and enjoy the Lord, soaking up His Spirit's presence, especially the sense of rest.

Draw

Draw what you saw or experienced during this time if you wish or share your thoughts with someone you trust.

Meditate

Rest is a great gift of God. Pick one of the following verses and chew on it. Then turn it into a meditation and prayer.

"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength." Isaiah 30:15

"They who dwell in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. They will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.'" Psalms 91:1,2

"I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body will also rest secure." Psalms 16:8-9

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, he is my fortress. I will not be shaken." Psalms 62:5,6

"In that day the Root of Jesse [Jesus] will stand as a banner for the people; the nations will rally to him and his place of rest will be glorious." Isaiah 11:10

Pray

Thank God for the rest that is ours in Jesus Christ. Praise Him that He gives us rest, even in the midst of our enemies. Ask for courage to turn to God for rest in every circumstance of life.

Resources to Equip



Hearing God's Whispers

Speak Lord for I'm trying to Listen! Kathryn's testimony

Hearing the Holy Spirit's Whispers - Creative Reflection I, II and III

Spiritual Protection

Spiritual Protection for Home and Family – Biblical Principles

Companions: Spiritual Protection for Home and Family –Daily Prayers

Personal Spiritual Protection - Prayers to Maintain Christ's Victory

Spiritual Protection for Christian Leaders

Spiritual Protection for Intercessors

You are Awesome in God's Sight - Prayers for Young People

Prayer

Just a Few Tent Pegs - *Build Your Kingdom Here* Tasmanian Prayer Tour Story

To Order or Contact Us

If you would like to order booklets in hard copy or electronic file please email us at email: kingdompm1@gmail.com

Each of our publications is available for a donation which helps us continue to share our resources. To assist with your donation:

PayPal available. Contact us for details.

Cheques: Please make out to P & K Yaxley. Email us for our postal address.

Direct payment:

Name: P & K Yaxley

Westpac Bank

BSB: 737621 Acc: 587656

Kingdom Presence Ministries is the ministry name of Peter and Kathryn Yaxley. As a couple we are called to share the presence and goodness of the Lord with others. Our heart is to encourage, strengthen and empower the Body of Christ according to Eph 4:12, by providing practical, accessible, Scripture based resources. These materials reflect our experience of over two decades in ministry in Australia, providing helpful keys for Christian life and service.

Like us on Facebook: **Kingdom Presence Ministries**