

Praying with the Imagination



One way God often seems to speak to people in prayer is through the imagination. This can get beyond what I feel I *ought* to think or say in God's presence, what the *correct* ideas to have are. The imagination helps me to *see* instead what I really want from God, and what God is actually offering me, at this stage in my life.

'But,' many people may say, 'I have no imagination.' They tend to mean that they don't have the kind of imagination that comes up with vivid, technicolour images. However, imagination works in different ways for different people. Some see images with the detail of a film director. Others get a sense of the feel of the place, without picturing it in the same way. Others again will build up a mental scene detail by detail.

No-one has no imagination. Take a moment now to get a sense of a place you are fond of, or a person, or a pet you love. The power that enables you to know what that feels like is the imagination.

The following exercise can help you to use that same power in prayer.

This prayer works well with any gospel or Old Testament scene where there is action taking place (so don't choose passages that are simply teaching or poetry).

Take a few moments to become still and quiet, and simply invite God to work through your imagination as you pray with the passage. Ask God for what you want, perhaps, *'to know you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly.'*

Read through the text two or three times until you are thoroughly familiar with the story.

Then let the scene gradually build up in your mind's eye. Take your time... and begin to **see** everything that is around, to **hear**, to **feel**, to **smell**, to **taste**...

Is it a first century, modern day, or different cultural setting...?

Where are you? Take your own place in the unfolding scene. You may start as a bystander, be one of the central characters, or simply enter the scene and into the action as yourself.

Let yourself be drawn naturally into conversation with Jesus or another participant. Stay in the scene for as long as you have chosen to, and then draw the prayer to a close

Suitable passages:

Matthew 14: 22-23 Peter walks on water

Mark 10: 46 - 52 The cure of Bartimaeus

Luke 5: 1-11 Call of the four disciples

John 13: 1-17 Jesus washes the disciples feet

Exodus 3: 1-6 Moses and the burning bush

1 Samuel 3: 1-10 The call of Samuel

Ideas taken from (former) Loyola Hall resources