



Vision and Commitment 2018  
A year to focus on discipleship

Every day, in  
everything  
&  
everywhere

## Prioritising: Sitting at the Feet of Christ (Mark 6:45-46)

You will need:  
Bibles

### Introduction

- What was the busiest time of your life?
- Do you consider yourself to be a busy or active person?
- Do you perhaps take pride in being a little too busy and active; in accomplishing a lot during the day; in being known as someone who is always involved and engaged and who is usually asked to do things?
- What do you suspect is behind the need to be needed and busy?

### Reflection

#### Read Luke 10:38-42.

Ask someone to set a timer for five minutes (or ten minutes if you are brave). Begin with the Lord's Prayer together, and then ask each person to be as still and as silent as they can be for the next five (or ten) minutes. Try to be still on the outside, but also on the inside, not letting your mind wander to all the things you are meant to be doing tomorrow.

Instead, listen.

Begin by listening to all the sounds that you normally don't hear because you are too distracted. Then listen to your (slower, deeper) breathing, and to your beating heart. Then listen to hear if God might be saying anything to you. Finish by saying the Lord's Prayer together again. Share your experience with one another.

- What was the busiest time of your life?
- How did that feel? Was it easy or difficult?
- Why might this kind of practice be important?
- Is stillness and silence a regular part of worship in your corps? Why or why not?

### Discussion

#### Read Mark 6:45-46.

- Look at these two verses. What are the stories that happen just before and just after Jesus goes away to pray? How would you characterise these in terms of drama, energy and importance?





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- Why does Mark interrupt the flow of this significant narrative to mention that Jesus went up a mountain to pray and spend time alone with God?
- Why do Mark's readers need to know this?
- Why do you think Jesus stops to pray at this moment?
- What is the connection in Jesus' life between prayer and action? Is this a model for our own lives?
- Are we meant to imitate Jesus in all the things he does? Can we? What are some possible problems with that idea?
- How might prayer empower us to participate in the ministry of Jesus?
- Do we prioritise prayer? Individually and corporately? Think of some examples where this might be true and others where it might not.
- What are some reasons why we might neglect prayer?
- How can we begin to make prayer a priority, both personally and within our corps?

## Action

Be very intentional this week about prioritising prayer and God's word. Pray when you wake up, and before going on any kind of social media. Pray before you send any email. Pray before, during, and after any interaction. Pray before starting tasks, pause in the middle to pray, and pray at the end as well. Pray as you walk down the street. Pray before and after you eat. Pray before you go to bed. Arrange times to pray with friends.

Ask God during these prayer times for opportunities and empowerment to participate in his ministry; ask to be made more and more into the likeness of Jesus; ask that all your thoughts, words and actions would glorify the name of God and encourage his children; and thank God in all things. Do not do any of this ostentatiously. The goal is not to be seen as pious, but to be conformed into the image of Christ as we are united with him.

## Leader's Guide

Jesus is frequently shown retreating to a quiet place and spending time praying to the Father throughout the Gospels. This is a wondrous thing. One scholar describes this as humans being allowed to listen in on the conversation at the heart of creation. Jesus takes time to meet and speak with his Father even when he is in the middle of extremely significant moments of ministry.

Jesus clearly prioritised prayer, and taught his disciples to do the same. This can be seen in his instructions to them on prayer, but also in his desire for them to spend time with him, listening and learning from him.

Prayer is not asking God to bless what you are planning to do anyway, nor convincing God of the things you think he should do. Prayer is not getting wishes from a genie, nor is it





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summed up by the ‘thoughts and prayers’ we tend to send over social media whenever there is a crisis in the world.

When Jesus prayed, he affirmed his union with the Father, declared his faithful commitment to the Father’s mission in the world, and received strength to fulfil that purpose. He did not even act out of his own initiative, but committed himself to doing whatever he saw his Father doing! (John 5:19).

We cannot simply imitate a lot of what Jesus did, because Jesus is the incarnate Son of God and his ministry was unique. Yet, in prayer and through time spent in God’s word and with him, we can be brought up into the relationship that Jesus shared with his Father and with the Spirit. We can participate in the love that exists within the Trinity. This is only possible because Jesus took on a human body in the Incarnation, and gifted us with the Holy Spirit following his death and resurrection, thus opening the way for us to be united with the Father. Time spent sitting at the feet of Jesus in prayer, worship and the word, then, is time spent being united with God in Christ. The result of this is not magically answered prayers, but spiritually transformed people.

When people are conformed into the image of Jesus Christ, they are empowered to participate in the ministry Jesus is still working in the world. Without this union with Christ, this prioritising of the relationship with Christ, we are not empowered to participate in what God is doing in the world. We certainly cannot do the things Jesus tells the Church to do - heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead, preach the gospel - without the presence and power of God in us.

Yet we often neglect prayer, personally and corporately. And then we wonder why the problems of the world, and the problems of our own hearts, continually overwhelm us. Prayer sometimes appears to the world - and to us - to be a waste of time, a ‘soft option’ when there is so much work to be done. Yet Jesus stopped to pray, and told his followers to spend time sitting at his feet. If we want to be disciples, we must first learn to sit at the feet of Christ.

## Further resources

If you are interested in learning more about prayer:

- The Prayer Network’s *One Thing* course is a three-part teaching series focusing on personal and corporate prayer - [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/one-thing](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/one-thing)
- 24-7 Prayer and Alpha have teamed up to create a six-week prayer course, complete with videos and questions - [www.24-7prayer.com/prayer-course](http://www.24-7prayer.com/prayer-course)

