



Session 1: Still lyfe introduction



Stepping into the Still lyfe stream...

In a busy, distracting and hurried world, we hunger for a deep life of prayer and greater intimacy with God. The Still lyfe stream constantly brings us back to what is most important – love. Love for God and love from God. This is the foundation of our faith.

This stream stresses the value of prayer, silence, solitude, observation, listening and slowing down to help us to recognise God’s presence in our daily lives.

In this session, we explore the importance of developing a rhythm of prayer.

Previous session review

- Recap on your experiences of last week’s challenge. How did it go? Was it helpful?
- If you weren’t able to try the challenge, explore the question: Where and how did you experience God last week?

Read

Read the passage several times through, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. At the end of the text you will find helpful background information in our ‘Setting the Scene’ section.

As you read, look out for shockers and blockers.

Shockers – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

Blockers – something from the text that raises questions for you.

Daniel 6.1-14

Darius divided his kingdom into a hundred and twenty states and placed a governor in charge of each one. In order to make sure that his government was run properly, Darius put three other officials in charge of the governors. One of these officials was Daniel. And he did his work so much better than the other governors and officials that the king decided to let him govern the whole kingdom.

The other men tried to find something wrong with the way Daniel did his work for the king. But they could not accuse him of anything wrong, because he was honest and faithful and did everything he was supposed to do. Finally, they said to one another, “We will never be able to bring any charge against Daniel, unless it has to do with his religion.”

They all went to the king and said:

“Your Majesty, we hope you live forever! All of your officials, leaders, advisors, and governors agree that you should make a law forbidding anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next thirty days. Everyone who disobeys this law must be thrown into a pit of lions. Order this to be written and then sign it, so it cannot be changed, just as no written law of the Medes and Persians can be changed.”

So King Darius made the law and had it written down.

Daniel heard about the law, but when he returned home, he went upstairs and prayed in front of the window that faced Jerusalem. In the same way that he had always done, he knelt down in prayer three times a day, giving thanks to God.

The men who had spoken to the king watched Daniel and saw him praying to his God for help. They went back to the king and said, “Didn’t you make a

Setting the scene:

- Daniel was taken prisoner, probably in his mid-teens, by the Babylonian army when Jerusalem was captured. Alongside his friends, he faced all kinds of challenges to keep his Jewish faith in another culture. Daniel was an exceptionally gifted and intelligent man, held in such high esteem that he becomes a statesman-like figure in the government of Babylon. Unable to fault him, his enemies used his religion to set a trap and bring him down.
- Daniel’s prayer life seems to follow accustomed practices which included a routine of praying in his room on his knees three times a day.
- Daniel knew the consequences of continuing his habitual and public prayer, but chose to risk being thrown in the lion’s den.
- The story ends well for Daniel as God sends an angel to protect him from the lions.

law that forbids anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next thirty days? And doesn't the law say that everyone who disobeys it will be thrown into a pit of lions?"

"Yes, that's the law I made," the king agreed. "And just like all written laws of the Medes and Persians, it cannot be changed."

The men then told the king, "That Jew named Daniel, who was brought here as a captive, refuses to obey you or the law that you ordered to be written. And he still prays to his god three times a day." The king was really upset to hear about this, and for the rest of the day he tried to think how he could save Daniel.

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

Reflect

After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.

Begin your reflection time by each naming your shockers and blockers. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.

You might also like to explore these questions:

Q1. What does your current practice or rhythm of prayer look like?

Q2. How might developing a habit of prayer (like Daniel's) be helpful or daunting to you?



'As long as we have unsolved problems, unfulfilled desires, and a mustard seed of faith, we have all we need for a vibrant prayer life.'

John Ortberg



Respond

As you draw near to the end of your session, consider how you might respond to your reading and reflection by creating your own challenge to help you develop a rhythm of prayer this week, or choosing one of the following:

Challenge ideas:

1. An Appetite for Prayer

One of the reasons we remember to eat is that we feel hungry. This week, use your hunger pangs as a reminder to pray.

2. Saved by the Bell

Set an alarm on your phone to prompt you to pray. You could set it to go off once an hour and pray for a few seconds, or perhaps a couple of times a day when you are likely to be able to carve out ten minutes.

3. Dear Diary

Keep a journal and pen by your bed, and take a few minutes at the beginning and end of each day to write down your prayers. What are you concerned about or grateful for? How have you seen God at work in your life, and where do you need his help?

Group Prayer

As a group, pray for one another this week as you explore a deeper life with God through prayer.

Pray that your times of prayer will increase and become more habitual throughout each day.



'To this day I start every day on my knees praying by my bed, and that's my grounding for the day.'

Bear Grylls

