

The Air in Our Lungs

June 22, 2025

"The Parable of the Deranged Greyhound"

Daily Devotionals for June 23-28

Monday, June 23 Read Psalm 5

This is what is often called a "Psalm for Deliverance." What are some of the characteristics of this prayer and how would you characterize both the attitude and manner in which the psalmist prays? God is responsive to it, what does this tell you about God? How is this like-or unlike- your own prayers?

Tuesday June 24 Read Isaiah 40:27-31

Sometimes we feel just like v.27 but often that's because we are so distracted by the worries and demands of life that we fail to see God at work in our lives. What is the reality of God for you that you "have not seen" and "have not heard (v.28)?" What sort of pause do you need in order to be more aware of God?

Wednesday, June 25 Read Matthew 6:1-15

This description of prayer offered here is, at its heart, about an intensely personal relationship between the worshipper and God. How does pausing our normal life-carving out time and space- for prayer create the conditions for such a personal connection? Think of how the same process strengthens other relationships in your life. Compared to other aspects of your life, how much room do you make for God?

Sermon Notes from 6/22/25

"The Parable of the Deranged Greyhound"

1. Pausing is the essential first step in laying ourselves before God (tefillah).

God says, *"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."* -Psalm 46:10

2. In order to pause and open ourselves to God, we first...

A. ...create stillness and separation from the world

"But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." -Matthew 6:6

B. ...focus on God through a process of relaxing, breathing and repetition.

"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words... This, then, is how you should pray..." Matthew 6:7-9

C. ...engage our whole bodies.

"Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre." -Psalm 149:3

Thursday, June 26 Read 1 John 5:10-15

Our faith is rooted not in what we can do nor in what God can give us but in who Jesus is and what He calls us to be. In the first few verses here, John reminds us of that on which our faith is based. What things or attitudes often distract us from this central truth? Now look closely at vv.13-14. Why do we have cause to be bold? How does this knowledge and this faith shape how we pray and for what? How does this knowledge and this faith shape how we pray and for what?

Friday, June 27 Read James 4:1-10

Think back on your reading from yesterday and then read vv.2-3 in this passage again. What does this tell us about the things for which we pray and the proper attitude we need to have when we pray? Though we are right to ask things of God, what role does (or should) the attitudes of our hearts play in these requests? Do we, sometimes, act as if we *deserve* God's answers and gifts? Does that make a difference?

Saturday, June 28 Read Psalm 63

If a life of prayer is about a closer relationship with God, what is this psalm saying about the result of such a life? Is your own prayer life enriching and satisfying to your soul? Why or why not? Discuss this with God today in prayer.

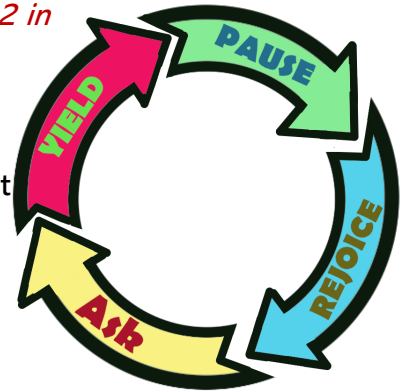


“The Parable of the Deranged Greyhound”

Week of June 22, 2025

Small Group Study & Discussion Guide

Be sure to leave time for discussing Question #2 in Part II ‘Going Deeper.’



I. Getting Started:

1. **Read Isaiah 40:27-31 aloud with the group.** Share: “Sometimes we feel just like v.27 but often that’s because we are so distracted by the worries and demands of life that we fail to see God at work in our lives.” Discuss the following:
 - *What is the reality of God for you that you “have not seen” and “have not heard (v.28)?”*
 - *What sort of pause do you need in order to be more aware of God?*
 - **Look at Sermon Note #1.** The Hebrew word for ‘prayer’ (tífilah) means “to lay before” or “to set down or unburden.” Why is such unburdening both a necessary prerequisite for our relationship with God and something we strive for in prayer?

II. Going Deeper:

1. **Read Matthew 6:1-15** Share: “This description of prayer offered here is, at its heart, about an intensely personal relationship between the worshipper and God.” Explore the following with your group:
 - *How does pausing our normal life-carving out time and space- for prayer create the conditions for such a personal connection? Think of how the same process strengthens other relationships in your life.*
 - *What does such a pause look like for you? Compared to other aspects of your life, how much room do you make for God?*
2. **Read aloud all of Sermon Note #2 then discuss the following:**
 - *What obstacles do you encounter in setting a time and place for dedicated prayer? Discuss various strategies people in your group use to set aside space for prayer. Are there shorter breaks (apart from our time in the ‘prayer closet’) we can take at other times in the day to connect with God? What do these look like?*
 - *Relaxing, breathing and repetition is part of an ancient practice known as “centering.” Many use these sorts of techniques (without naming them as such) in order to become more focused on challenging tasks. Have members of the group share ways they “center” themselves for prayer. If this is a new concept, explore some of the reasons it might feel strange or even uncomfortable. Note that repetitive prayers (like the Lord’s Prayer or even a simple “Lord Come!”-see 1 Corinthians 16:22, or the ancient hymn in Philippians 2:5-11) have long been used and repeated as a means of preparing to pray.*
 - *List some ways to practice “kinetic” or active praying that some of the group members may use. A few examples might be journaling, exercising, prayer postures (kneeling, etc.), even playing music. Not everyone finds these helpful, but for those that do, what is the advantage? Even if we are not that active, how can all of us engage our whole bodies in connecting with God?*

III. Taking it With You:

1. **Do the following two things:** *Divide into pairs and agree to pray specifically for one another in the coming week. Also, agree to explore new ways of developing your prayer life (centering, setting times, etc.) and plan of sharing your experience when next you gather.*