



The Emotion in Devotion

Icebreaker: If you keep a journal, or if you were to keep a journal, what would it look like and be? When would you do it? Where?

Introduction: A devotional life is made up of those times and places where we attend to the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This is the business of a disciple.

Our radically individualised culture trains us to be acutely aware of our feelings and to place ourselves (rather than rabbi Jesus) at the centre of the world. It's part of our brokenness. We are all broken, our hearts are broken, and this means that the bit of us that does emotion is broken.

Our devotional life is made up of worship and prayer and sacrifice and can get emotional. Some of us experience and express emotion easily and our challenge is not to confuse emotion with devotion. Others find intimacy and feelings harder to express or deal with and we are in danger of disqualifying our devotions as not valid because of our lack of emotion.

Scripture: John 13:18-30 (or 1-30)

This Passover meal would have been eaten with the disciples reclining on their left side around a table. The place of honour being on the host's (Jesus') left, the place of friendship & intimacy on his right.

Reflective Question 1: where would you take your place at dinner?

You could have a large piece of paper on the floor with a circle drawn with Jesus' position shown – and then invite people to show where they would be. Then discuss. The point being that some will feel comfortable with the intimacy and emotion of being really close, whereas others will be more comfortable further away. This exercise on its own could easily give you enough for the evening and plenty of scope for prayer ministry.

Scripture: Psalm 42:1-5

The Psalmist weeps over the sense that God sometimes feels absent and at other times celebrates with joy and praise. Two extremes of emotion.

Reflective Question 2: In the last few months, what emotions have you felt in worship or prayer? Weeping? Joy? Nothing?

Reflective Question 3: what steps can you take to attend more to the presence of Holy Spirit in your life? What needs to change in your devotional life? *Try and get to this question (and then follow up in a few weeks' time).*

Websites

A really good guide to journaling:

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/how-to-encounter-god-through-journaling-11579830.html>

David's sermon on this topic will be on the "Follow Me" page of "Teaching Series".