

Week 1.

- How would you define 'prayer'?
- Read Luke 10:38-42
- In this passage it would appear that Jesus 'gives a green light' to contemplative prayer. Do you agree?

It is not that Martha does not have faith - more an attitude of inattention to Jesus in her 'busyness' that is being gently reprimanded here.

'Contemplation is about giving attention to God. There are no rules & nothing to achieve in this form of prayer.'

- Do you ever think there are too many 'words' in our culture?
- Do you feel comfortable with silence and silent prayer?
- What might help you become comfortable with this form of prayer?

A variety of people in the past have written about their experience of Silent Prayer including : Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Thomas Merton

- How might spending time in silence before God each day help deepen your faith & help you each day?
- Pritchard states : 'this prayer isn't for romantics; it's for mystics.' What does he mean? Can we be 21st century mystics?
- Close with a short period of silent prayer.



Ways To Pray : Contemplative Prayer

Prayer is :

- **Global / Personal**
- **A Duty / A Delight**
- **Difficult / Easy**
- **Communication / Encounter**
- **Intelligent / Immersive**
- **Silent / Verbal**
- **Corporate / Private**
- **All these things & more.....**

'In silence we pray, love, listen, compose, paint, write, think, suffer. Silence prevents us from trying [to possess, manipulate or make others like ourselves. It] creates the conditions & opportunity for us to speak [in a timely and thoughtful manner.]

[Michael Stancliffe : p.72 in Pritchard]

'True contemplation is not a psychological trick but a theological grace'

[Thomas Merton in Celebration of Discipline : Richard Foster : 2008 : p.19]

Recommended Reading for the Series :

How To Pray : John Pritchard : SPCK : 2002

Praying Through Life : Stephen Cottrell : Church House Pub : 1998

Prayer - Experiencing Awe & Intimacy With God : Timothy Keller : Hodder : 2016