

July, 2015

Dear Contemplative Friend,

If you are open to, even thirsty for, some "Intimacy with God" may I introduce a new twist to an ongoing event with The Anchorage? For years we have offered Quiet Days, at least spring and fall, sometimes more often. The basic idea coincides with the reason we exist: to encourage and provide space for men and women to be alone with God in silence, to listen for whatever God might want to say.

Beginning with our new fiscal year, July 1, we are offering a series of Desert Days for YOU – wherever you are! Every first Friday in even months, we will support Desert Days all over the country! The idea is to "leave everything, following Christ into the desert." **The first Desert Day will be on Friday, August 7.**

The format will be simple, so that anyone can do it. If you want to join in a Desert Day with a group, or by yourself, or host a group, let us know as soon as you know and your name/city will be added to our list.

Participants are invited to arrive between 9 and 9:30, for coffee/hot tea. At 9:30 the host will provide a brief introduction to the space, such as where restrooms are, where guests may roam, sit or walk for time alone with God. An indication of how lunch will be announced, (ring a bell?) and where to come. Then brief introductions to each other, with name and hometown, and a sense of what nudged you to be there that day. Guests may brown bag, or bring \$10 to pay for lunch. (Need to let host know ahead if want to purchase lunch so host can order.)

Hosts may use a schedule provided by The Anchorage, (see below) including times for an opening prayer, music for settling in, Scripture or another reading for pondering, then time with God in solitude, lunch, more settling in with music, prayer and another reading for the afternoon, and more time with God. The closing, around 2:15, would be a time for instrumental music while guests discern what to share, and then anyone may share what they have received, thus creating a ripple effect to know what others have received. A prayer/benediction to end the day no later than 2:30 or 3 depending on the group.

The idea of the whole country full of dots representing people who are taking time for solitude with God at the same time is very moving isn't it? Please join us in praying that it will be what God wants it to be! Thanks!

Possible Schedule

9:00 welcome, serve tea/coffee
9:30 Light a candle to honor God's presence – then give an introduction to the space and to each other
10:00 Opening Prayer – using music, scripture, (maybe lectionary reading?)
10:10 Brief comment on topic – with simple handout for reflection (maybe Lectio Divina with scripture?)
10:20 Find space to be with God – sit quietly, walk
11:20 ring bell for lunch
11:30 Lunch – all together. Please use lunch to ask this question for the group to share
"What are you learning from God, what has God been saying to you, over the last 2 months?"
Someone please record the responses (with or without names) and send a copy along to us
12:30 Regather in prayer with music, scripture (maybe another lectionary reading?)
12:40 Brief comment on topic – with simple handout for reflection
12:50 Find space to be with God
1:50 ring bell for closing prayer*
2:00 ask folks to share something of the gifts of the day – so that there is a ripple effect of all gifts given
2:05 play instrumental music so they can ponder what they'd like to share
2:10 Sharing
2:25 benediction or prayer to close
2:30 adjourn *If your groups discerns to adjourn at 3, ring bell at 2:20 for 2:30 closing prayer

Nothing is in stone, except maybe

1. lighting the candle
2. honoring the space of others – not to sit too close to each other when intentionally alone with God.
3. I'd suggest you adhere to the times faithfully so folks can depend on starting and leaving when expected – it's just good manners?
4. And The Anchorage will appreciate it greatly – if you would be faithful with the sharing at lunch, with someone taking notes to send to us. The notes from these lunchtime conversations will provide leadership for the direction of The Anchorage. It is the way our Servant Leaders listen for God's leading when we meet. Since God has called us together it provides an open forum for God to speak.

Thank you for your interest! Most of all thank you for sensing that this is important to God – for you and for the world! Your own publicity for your event will be necessary since this is new. It will be on our website this month!

Praying you the peace and hope of Christ, Catherine