

“Talk about Transformation!”
Depth of Soul ~ Vitality in Service

□ Personal Reflections

I am struck by the tenacity of prayer spelled out in so many ways throughout the Scripture: “The Bible does not prescribe the time or length of prayer, but it does offer guidelines. In Psalm 88 prayer is offered in the early morning (v. 13), and in Psalm 55 prayers are said evening, morning and noon (v. 17). The author of Psalm 119 advocates prayer seven times a day (v. 164). Daniel knelt for devotions three times a day (Daniel 6:10). Jesus prayed before sunrise (Mark 1: 35) and in the evening when the day’s work was over (Mark 6:46). Peter prayed at the third, sixth, and ninth hours...The Christian is not bound to ritual laws that regulate the preparation for prayer, so he is not absolutely bound to set times for prayer. Yet there are times that are more appropriate for prayer than others: the gathering together for worship, the hours before work and bedtime, the time right before meals, when we need to remind ourselves of the goodness of God. But a Christian should feel free to pray anywhere, anytime, in the midst of daily work and play as well as in the solitude of his room in the early morning or late in the evening.” (From *The Struggle of Prayer* by Donald Bloesch)

When, where, what, how, and for whom are you praying today?
Devote yourself to prescribed times and pursue him with all your heart!

□ Coming Alongside

We want to encourage you in your personal spiritual development as leaders and teams. Soul Care Retreats seem to be our most unique opportunity for coming alongside leaders in the vitality of their souls. Our Soul Care Retreats are a great place to nurture your soul. Each retreat is held at Emery House, situated along the banks of the Merrimack River in West Newbury, MA. Our spring retreats are full and we’ll be posting future dates soon.

In addition, we are available to serve as leaders and facilitators for local church and ministry Soul Care Retreats for congregations and/or teams. In the first few months of 2005 we were delighted to serve a variety of local churches in this manner and look forward to many more in the coming months!

Other ways we come alongside leaders and teams include: individual spiritual direction; ministry team consultations; spiritual formation groups; church and team ministry health assessments. Call Sage at 978-646-4175 for information.

□ Recommended Readings

Acedia is a term used several centuries ago to describe one’s spiritual boredom, an indifference to matters of religion, or simple laziness. Many today have lost their excitement about a spiritual quest for the abundant life of Christ. Several activities have become substitutes for our spiritual disciplines...workaholism, too much technology (internet, e-mail, etc.), various addictions, and myriad distractions. Leaders have become lukewarm in their daily walk with Christ and assume they can live on the fumes of previous experiences of spiritual passion or zeal. Are you a product of spiritual apathy and in need of stoking the embers of a latent fire within? Then let me encourage you to read the Word slowly and reflectively today; pause between paragraphs; rest between sentences; and stop when the Spirit arrests you at words that leap off the pages of Scripture.

Instead of suggesting any of the latest titles offered to us in our Christian book stores or on the web, this time I’d like to suggest that you acquaint yourself with the Word of God. Make daily Bible reading a life-giving priority. Embrace the truth of God’s Word and let it soak deeply into every possible pore of your soul. Fall in love with the Word once more and delight in the truth you discover. The Living Word is our life, health and

daily sustenance...feast on His Word and discover again – like the very first time – an encounter with the Living God.

Check out our website for additional resources for leaders and teams: www.LeadershipTransformations.org

Here you will find the full complement of ministry services and resources LTi is currently providing our constituents. Note some of the free resources available, the new *Becoming A Healthy Disciple Small Group Study and Worship Guide*, as well as the growing number of language translations now available for *Becoming A Healthy Church*. And, every time you enter the CBD (www.ChristianBook.com) site through our website, a donation is provided to our ministry – another way to support LTi!

□ Renewal Yearnings

“We are not happy because we are unforgiving, and we are unforgiving because we feel superior to others. Mercy is the fruit of the highest degree of love, because love creates equals, and a greater love makes us inferior.

- Those who do not love feel superior to everyone else.
- Those who love feel equal to everyone else.
- Those who love much gladly take the lower place.

Each one of us can identify his position somewhere along this spectrum, which comprises the three degrees of the spiritual life here on earth:

- Death for those who do not love.
- Life for those who love.
- Holiness for those who love much.” (From *In Search of the Beyond* by Carlo Carretto)

Jesus lived his life to the full, always stooping, out of love, to the lowliest place, in order that others may discover the abundant life. His holiness took him to the place of rejection and suffering on the cross in order that each of us could experience eternal life. Are you willing to pursue holiness, loving much and sacrificially serving others for the sake of Christ? May we all pursue such love and may we generously give it away to all who cross our daily pathways...

I trust you will continue to be an active part of the team – through your love, prayers, gifts, ministry suggestions and participation!

Your grateful brother in Christ,

Steve Macchia

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