

GOSPEL EXERCISES

Writing Letters to Gospel People

Come to Know yourself better by reflecting on the mistakes of others

Intent of the exercise

- ✓ Bible study
- ✓ Self discovery and self knowledge.
- ✓ Growing honest to ourselves.
- ✓ Acceptance of our failures.

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Note for the Moderator - Dynamics of this Exercise

1. The participants are requested to pick **one person** found in the Gospel narrative whose behavior they do not approve (*For instance; Peter, Pilate, Herod, The Pharisees, The Soldiers, The Tax collectors, The Prodigal Son, The Elder Son, The Rich Man of Lazarus story, The would-be followers of Jesus, Herodias, Annas and Caifas, The Bad thief, The Tax Collectors, The Unforgiving Servant, etc...*
2. Next, they are told to write a "frank" letter to that person and tell him/her how they feel about him/her, point out their shortcomings and defects, and give them some advice on how to improve,
3. After sharing their letters with the group, the participants are asked to re-address the letters to themselves (*as if a third person had written the letters them*)
4. Next, they are asked to read the letters now addressed to them very attentive and be attuned to their feelings.
5. Often enough, in their letters, - the participants - unconsciously, criticize the very defects and negative qualities they dislike in themselves.
6. This exercise besides helping the participants to learn about the persons of the Gospel's narratives has a good potential for self-disclosure thus helping them to self-knowledge.

PROCEDURE:

1. Introductory Session.

- ✓ Meeting the participants.
- ✓ Explaining the nature of the exercise. (*Do not disclose the self-revelatory potential of the exercise*)
- ✓ Singing hymns and/or bhajans.
- ✓ Opening prayer.

2. Personal Work: Studying some N.T. Texts and writing personal letters Instructions to the participants

✓ Suggested thoughts:

We dislike in others what we dislike in ourselves.

We blame others for what we should blame ourselves.

We project our failures, shortcomings and weaknesses on others.

By criticizing others for the very same defects we have ourselves, we, unconsciously may be looking for a sort of "vicarious" satisfaction.

In one way or other, any criticism of others implies "self-criticism"

We have to accept ourselves as we are if we want to improve ourselves.

Yet, in order to accept ourselves, the first thing we have to have, is self-knowledge, a thing we loath.

No man is good or bad, he is human! We are all fallible human beings...

6 . Closing Group Prayer.

Close the event with an active participatory prayer service.

It can be a prayer meeting, or a Para-liturgical service,

Get all the participants involved in the preparation and execution of the group prayer service