

Interrupting Silence: Speaking Out Against Injustice





OASIS Protocols for Breakout Rooms and General Discussion: A review

- Assign spokesperson/note taker at beginning of breakout session
- Ensure all participants have a chance to speak (if they want to speak)
- Be respectful in considering and giving feedback to new or different views
- When possible, a team member may be present in each breakout room to provide support



In today's class we will explore the foundational role spirituality plays in speaking out and working for justice in our broken world.

Seeking God in Prayer



Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

--Mark 1:35

After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

--Mark 6:46

Seeking God in Prayer



Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ “*Abba*,^[a] Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

³⁷ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

³⁹ Once more he went away and prayed the same thing.

--Mark 14:35-39

Seeking God in Prayer



When we seek God in prayer, God finds us. In prayer, people **call** God by name, **remember** God's gracious acts, **listen** for what God has to say, and then **offer** themselves to God. (Book of Order W.21001)

This reciprocal relationship of prayer brings us closer to God and enfolds us in God's care. It gives us what we need to join God's work in the world.

Seeking God in Prayer



“Centering activities bring us back to God and increase the likelihood that we are doing advocacy in God’s name, and not in our own.”

--Blair Moorhead

Seeking God in Prayer



“The inference is that the very act of prayer is a way to remain courageous, a way to resist resignation that would result in losing heart. . . . Jesus does not assure the disciples that prayers are answered but only that the act of prayer is itself an act of resistance against discouragement and defeat.”

--Walter Brueggemann

Discussion Questions



1. Share a time when prayer, Bible study and conversation with others helped you in making an important decision or in dealing with a difficult problem.
2. What might be some indicators that could help us discern if our proposals and actions reflect God's will rather than our own?
3. Has work you were doing on behalf of someone else ever felt so hopeless that you wanted to give up? Have you experienced a time when persisting resulted in success? How did you gain the strength and energy to persist despite your discouragement?

Disagreeing in Love



“It truly takes courage to:

- enter into dialogue when we disagree with someone
- admit we might be wrong
- revise deeply held beliefs
- hold our beliefs with humility
- provoke others toward love
- place the importance of relationship ahead of the need to be right
- to stay in dialogue when someone is pushing our buttons or stating things we find demeaning, offensive, or hurtful.”

Disagreeing in Love



Start with Prayer

“During such times of prayer, we make ourselves available to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Here, God can reveal to us where we are being self-centered or acting out of fear or insecurity. Prayer can be the place the Holy Spirit guides us into creative spaces that open us to possibilities we might have not considered.”

Disagreeing in Love



Focus on Ourselves

Try to enter a difficult conversation from a posture of humility, curiosity, patience, and openness to learning and new possibilities.

Disagreeing in Love



Express Our Perspective and Reasons

Use a non-coercive style that invites conversation.

Disagreeing in Love



Assume the Other Person's Best Intentions

We can extend grace by trying to not judge another's motives or assume that everyone has the same life-shaping experiences.

Disagreeing in Love



Look for common ground

Finding common ground can help to further the conversation.

Disagreeing in Love



Trust the Relationship

Listening well and speaking lovingly can push the relationship to an even deeper and more meaningful way of being. When we are willing to be vulnerable enough to risk the relationship and name our perspective, we will be more likely to encounter the presence of God who meets us in these susceptible places.

Disagreeing in Love



Consider the Conversation a Beginning Point

This first conversation can be part of an on-going dialogue; it doesn't have to be the only conversation you have on the topic where you disagree.

Discussion Questions



1. Of the practices presented for engaging in difficult conversations, which one or ones have you relied on to help steer your conversations?
2. Is there an idea or a practice mentioned that you think could be helpful that you would like to try to use more?
3. Hughes says we need to trust that we are better off attempting a conversation than not. What positive results have you seen when you have had a successful difficult conversation with someone?
4. What might be a negative result of avoiding a difficult conversation?