

Printed Script for Introduction to Time with Jesus

Hey there! This is Teddi Pettee. Quarantined in California but happy to be talking to real people... well through video at least.

Our Leader Development Department thought this might be a sweet time, as we're spending more time at home, maybe more time with our families, but a sweet time to elevate some ideas around our spiritual formation.

We think that God is always pursuing us, developing us. He is present with us. Sometimes we have to carve out space to pay attention to how He's present with us and what He's shaping in us.

My friend, our friend, Jerry Wheeler spent the last several years laser focused on helping people identify how Jesus was shaping them. He has taught me so much, and it's in his honor – actually he would not like that, so it's in Jesus' honor but with Jerry in mind – that Nina and I put together a list of tools and resources. Things that have helped us as we have both been trying to pay attention to what Jesus has been shaping in us.

On the pages included here are several ideas. They might be familiar. Some are practices that we taught at Institute this year like Lectio Divina, an Imaginative Prayer and Praying Scripture. We hope that you find these useful tools.

Since I have you for a second, I'll just tell you what this looks like for me. I have a quiet space at my house (which I know is easier for me because my kids are grown and gone), but it kind of starts with determining your space. It might be your garage, or a balcony of an apartment, or maybe in a car in the driveway...but figure out a space where you can be quiet and not distracted. Get into that space. Plan to give yourself 20 to 30 minutes – especially as you begin.

You don't need to bring anything; just yourself and this appointment that you make with Jesus. You get in your space and what I do when I first get there is I start with this practice of asking myself, "How do I come into this space?"

Maybe that sounds like a weird question, but I start to notice that I'm distracted by a task list, or I'm anxious about money, or a work assignment, or I'm frustrated, or I feel guilty about something. As I paid attention to how I come into the space, I also pay attention to how Jesus is coming into the space. I realize that He's there with me in all of those emotions. And I start to release them to Him.

I start by noticing how I'm coming into it and then, I state my desire. It's something like this, "Holy Spirit, my desire is to be with you. Please use this time for our relationship, for the work that you are doing in me. Protect me and I just give you myself for the next few minutes. Jesus I just ask that you be with me. Amen." So, I notice. I invite Jesus. I sit with him and I let my thoughts come and go. And I talk to Jesus about them. Sometimes He nudges me; helps me pay attention to something. Sometimes I think of a scripture passage. Sometimes, as you're starting, it helps to use something like Lectio Divina.

So again, that's here with this document. Perhaps there's a worship song and you like the words... I would suggest don't bring it with you. Don't bring music 'cause it can distract you. But maybe the words, and you just read over them.

It's not a time of praying through your prayer list, but it's a time to just invite Jesus into the space. The resources here might be a great way for you to get started.

One of the things that I loved, that we learned at Institute this year, that I have been using a lot, is this physical thing where I hold my hands tight and I imagine that in my hands are the things that I'm thinking about... they include family, work and money, sometimes I feel it like really tight. In this space with Jesus, I imagine Him, with his grace-filled gaze opening His hands and inviting me to put my fists on top of His hands. He says, "When you're ready, you can give them to me." Sometimes it takes a while for me to be ready and sometimes I release right away. And he doesn't just throw them away, He holds my concerns with me, and He starts to do work in me and on them.

OK, so, being quarantined may get old pretty quick, but I'm pretty sure that there are unique appointments that Jesus is waiting to have with us in this space. God bless you. May He draw you closer to Him in all of this.