

Meeting 12 —Daily Wellbeing (Up to 90 minutes)



**women
thriving
in ministry**

AN INITIATIVE OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Gathering Time—5 minutes

- As people join the meeting, welcome them and create a place of hospitality. When all have arrived, open your time in prayer.

Conversation Starter—5 minutes

- If you were to share an emoji (or two) for your day today, what would it be? Why?

Sharing Together—45 minutes

Homework, to be shared in advance:

We're going to be spending the next four months connecting around four aspects of what makes for healthy and flourishing clergy. It's rooted in some research that takes into account the feedback of thousands of pastors and presents a model for wellbeing. You're invited to dig into some resources that they've created to help pastors lean into spiritual and wellbeing practices that contribute to lives of deeper spiritual joy. Would you...

- Take the assessment
 - <https://workwellresearch.org/research-projects/improve-your-wellbeing/>
 - It will require you to download a free app for your phone/tablet. If you need to input a referral code, use: LILLY
 - Feel free to explore the app and any practices that look interesting. No need to do too much with this, but you're invited to if you'd like!
- Watch [this 6 minute video](#) as an overview of the 4 categories that we're going to be exploring in the next 4 months: happiness, resilience, authenticity, and thriving.
 - While you watch, take notes and capture any questions that come to mind. Be prepared to bring one question to the group discussion.

To the Mentor: Please share the instructions and questions above with your mentees. Ask them to watch the short video and reflect a bit prior to your meeting.

As you prepare for this time, we want you to know that for the next 4 months, we're going to be digging into the research of a group from Notre Dame who has been investigating how well clergy are flourishing and how they can live more deeply in the abundant life of Christ. They've identified 4 things that all make up a flourishing life and help us consider areas that we might

pay attention to in order to intentionally grow in being abundant in the ways that bring us more Jesus-life! You're welcome to dig into the research a bit yourself, if you'd like, but it's not necessary. If it IS of interest, you can find a compiled report here:

https://workwellresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/FIM_Report_Flourishing_in_Ministry_2.pdf

Or, poke around the website here: <https://workwellresearch.org/>

Below are some guideposts for your discussion:

- Hopefully you were able to watch the brief video about the four areas that contribute to increased flourishing in ministry. Did you have any takeaways that you'd like to share with us?
- We asked you to identify a question that you had from watching the video. What question comes to mind for you as a result?
- This month, we want to focus on the idea of daily wellbeing or happiness. In the video, Dr. Bloom mentioned that healthy wellbeing is three good days for every one difficult day. How are you doing? Do you have more good, positive days than difficult, challenging days? (Perhaps this is another way of getting at John Wesley's question: "How is it with your soul?")
- What are 3-5 things that are a part of a "good day" for you?

Prayer Practice—Centering Prayer—15 minutes

Preparation: You will need to set a timer/use a chime for the centering prayer exercise. You could potentially use a chime tone from your phone, or download the free app, **Insight Timer**. **Insight Timer** will allow you to set a time that starts and ends with a bell.

Instruction: As a way of connecting with God, we want to encourage sharing a prayer practice of Centering Prayer together. One of the things that is important to remember as you are focusing on your well-being is that this isn't only about work that you do for yourself; it's also about work that God does within you. We want to invite God to be a resource to us in our well-being. Centering prayer is one of the practices that connects us with God's work on our behalf. Through this practice, we open our minds, hearts, bodies, and spirits to God. As we make ourselves totally available to God and give God access to our whole selves, we turn everything over to God and trust God with it. In this, we trust God to do the work in us that we can't do within ourselves. Our role is simply to show up and be present to what God has for us—which is always pure gift!

- **Say:** We are going to guide you through an abbreviated form of centering prayer now. There will be a chime that leads you into and out of this prayer time. Once we are settled, we will enjoy 10 minutes of silent prayer, after which, we will close with reciting The Lord's Prayer together.

- **Preparation:** Use a chime tone from your phone, or perhaps download the app, **Insight Timer**. You can set a time that starts and ends with a bell. *Plan for this to be 10 minutes.*
- **Say:** We invite you to get comfortable in your seats, as you place your feet flat on the floor, and hold your hands gently in your lap, turn your palms up, representing openness to God.
 - As you settle, take a moment to notice your breath and take a couple of deep breaths, as we begin to enter in together.
 - Often people will choose a word or an image as the symbol of their intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
 - If you choose to do this, silently introduce your sacred word as the symbol of your consent and surrender, as you enter into this prayer.
 - When engaged with your thoughts, let them pass by and return ever-so-gently to this sacred word or image.
 - At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with your eyes closed for a moment before we close with the Lord's prayer.

Inviting Response—15 minutes

- We've been discussing what it means for pastors to flourish in ministry. Part of what Jesus came to do is for us to know the "Abundant Life" as he spoke about in John 10:10.
 - Which do you have more of:
 - Tasks or time
 - Possibility or capacity
 - Burdens or celebration
 - Fill in the blank: if I could have more of anything, I'd like more _____.
- What is one thing you can do in the week ahead to incorporate a practice that contributes to more "good days"?
- Is there anything that you've not said yet that you'd like to say?
- Homework for next time: Would you consider committing to the "Map Your Day" exercise in the WorkWell app? It is an opportunity to pick an emoji (of the five offered there) to do a self-check in at various times in your day. Perhaps check in as your day starts and an hour before you wrap up for the day.
 - While you're in WorkWell, consider adding one of the other Daily Wellbeing practices (poke around until you find something that resonates with you! There are some audio-guided practices and some reflection practices, such as "End your day on a high note.")
- Confirm next meeting time.
- What emoji would you use to describe how you're doing now?

Closing Prayer—5 minutes

Remind them of the Group Commitments, one being prayer for one another. Are there any updates or new prayer concerns within this group? Share them now. Ask each person to pray for another person. (Agree upon those prior to praying.)

Handout—Centering Prayer for Home Practice, page 5

Centering Prayer for Home Practice

- Find a place in your home or office where you can be comfortable and quiet. Make it clear to others that you need to be undisturbed during your prayer time. Think about what you need to create a sacred space welcoming to your prayer. Create a place that you associate with prayer and where you would like to pray.
- Have a timer available. Using a timer enables you to focus entirely on your prayer during the period allotted. You can use a simple egg timer or buy a dedicated timer. If you want to splurge, buy a timer that makes a gentle chiming sound or use an app on your phone like Insight Timer.
- Think carefully about what time of day will work best for your practice. It's easier to create a regular practice if you are able to pray at the same time each day. Many people find that if they get up a little early this provides them with a time when they are peaceful and undisturbed. The earlier in the day you pray, the less likely that your prayer time will be swept away by the events of the day.
- Set realistic goals. If you know from experience that you are completely unable to meditate for more than five minutes at a time, keep that in mind. It's good to challenge yourself and work on creating new habits, but don't set yourself up for failure. If you're unsure how much you will be able to do, you could set up a required practice that seems doable, plus an extra credit assignment that you could do if you have enough time. Or, start with a doable goal, like 5 minutes of centering prayer a day, and then work up.
- Five minutes is better than no minutes! The only bad prayer session is a skipped prayer session. If you find that you are unable to stick to your goals, don't give up entirely. Centering prayer can help us to acknowledge how much we need God. When we see how unable we are to let go of our thoughts, we recognize our limitations and our dependency on God. A few minutes in prayer can help us to stay connected to God, and God can use our limitations to draw us closer.
- Meditation is hard work! The truth is that most people find centering prayer difficult. Like anything else, it gets easier with practice. Everything you put into it you will get back. When it's hardest, that might be when you get the most out of it.
- Many people find it much easier to maintain a home practice if they are practicing in a group once a week or at least every once in a while. The prayer of the other members of the group seems to provide important support. Another option is to find a prayer partner. This might be someone who has a similar centering prayer schedule or someone who is interested in talking about the practice. Check in with each other on a regular basis and share concerns. Practice together when possible.