

Lent in the Desert Guide 2021

Our journey through the Desert with Jesus for the season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday the 17th of February.

Ash Wednesday is the day to begin using the free app 'Into the Desert' at 'Day 1'. We are all encouraged to commit to using this devotional resource each day through Lent. It could be done in the morning or the evening or even at mid-day (or when it works best for you). If we faithfully follow the devotions daily it will finish with 'Day 40' on Palm Sunday the 28th of March, but these numbered days can be used at any time during the year so if you miss on or two you can finish the study off whenever suits.

If you have yet to download the app you can do so by following one of these two links:

Download the free app for Apple devices: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/id823229503>

Download the free app for Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.abm.lent.app>

You will also need to access Silence and Honey Cakes by Rowan Williams. Details about where to find a hard copy or soft copy as well as the podcasts on Youtube can be found on our Website <https://holyhermits.com.au/events/lent-in-the-desert/2021-02-24>

The book is a fuller version of the talks which Rowan Williams gave at the 2001 John Maine Seminar in Sydney. The YouTube podcast is a recording of these talks split up into chunks. Engaging with either will present a good basis for reflection and spiritual stimulation through Lent, and they can be used together depending on your preference and availability.

Ash Wednesday: 17th February

6pm Ash Wednesday contemplative service.

Start Day 1 'Into the Desert' app.

Before Session 1:

Make sure you have access to Silence and Honey Cakes and the ABM app. Plan when you are going to spend time with God each day using the 'Into the Desert' app and Silence and Honey Cakes to draw near to Jesus in the wilderness.

Some pre-session questions:

1. What are your thoughts/feelings about the desert?
2. How do you feel about spending time in solitude as well as time in community?
3. What do you hope to get out of the study?
4. Do you think that the desert mothers and fathers have something to teach you?
5. Pause for a moment and reflect on who you feel that you are entering this study, who you feel God sees you as and who you are called to be.

Session 1: 24th February

24th February: Meeting on zoom at 6pm we will share Day 8 of the ABM app, and where we stand together in the presence of Jesus as we begin this journey together.

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Before Session 2:

Read Chapter 1 of Silence and Honey Cakes or listen to the YouTube podcasts 'Life Death and Neighbours' and 'Winning our Neighbour for God' (which represents the second half of the first chapter in the book). Or both!

While reading/listening take note of phrases or sentences that strike you (note in your own words the meaning you take from them) You could use a pen if you have the book, highlight the phrases using kindle or Ebooks, or note the time on the YouTube video.

Some questions to ponder while reading/listening:

1. What are your experiences with judgement in a community like? Or with judgement in yourself?
2. Can you relate to the way Rowan describes **Harshness** with **Superiority**, leading to **Judgement** and **Mistrust**, which hinders relationships?
3. What does the desert hermits idea: 'No need to look for sin in others' mean to you?
4. What drives you to compete with others?
5. What in you, gets in the way of others coming to God? What are your inner blockages?
6. How might you practice 'dying to the neighbour' by not judging and letting the blockages within you die?
7. Do you have a sense of how failure and sin can only be healed by humility and solidarity?
8. What does it mean to stand with a sinner, or come alongside them?
9. How do you feel when you reflect on Rowans conclusion that to serve another's path to reconciliation is by reconciling ourselves to God?
10. How do you see Church playing a role in encouraging this and your role in the Church?

Session 2: 3rd March

Meeting on zoom at 6pm we will share Day 15 of the ABM app, reflect on reflect on Chapter 1 'Life Death and Neighbours' (+ 'Winning our neighbor for God' podcast) together and share our thoughts.

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Before Session 3:

Read Chapter 2 'Silence and Honey Cakes' or listen to the YouTube podcasts 'Silence and Honey Cakes' and 'Self-discovery' (representing the second part of the 2nd chapter). Or both!

While reading/listening take note of phrases or sentences that strike you (note in your own words the meaning you take from them) You could use a pen if you have the book, highlight the phrases using kindle or Ebooks, or note the time on the YouTube video.

Some questions:

1. What does vocation mean to you? What's your vocation/s?
2. What does the word holiness bring up in your mind?
3. Does the phrase: 'Standing back before the mystery of the other... allowing them room to live out their vocation as particular to them' resonate with you? Why/why not?
4. Does the concept of finding out who you are in the eyes of God – your true self present a challenge?
5. What does letting go of self-justification mean to you?
6. Can you relate to when Rowan highlights the hidden agenda of the ego 'telling me who I am'?
7. What does the way free choice and conformity are explored in the system of consumer driven possession bring up for you?
8. Spend a moment reflecting on how you may have been presented with choices based on who you are called to be and are in the eyes of God. How did you respond to those choices?
9. Has the dialogue of Jesus in the garden of gethsemane changed for you after reading this chapter?
10. How can we support one another as Church in letting go of self-justification and opening up to be our true-selves in the eyes of God?

Session 3: 10th March

Meeting on zoom at 6pm we will share Day 22 of the ABM app, reflect on Chapter 2 'Silence and Honey Cakes' (+ 'Self Discovery' podcast) together and share our thoughts.

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Before Session 4:

Read Chapter 3 'Fleeing' or listen to the YouTube podcast 'Leaving'. Or both!

While reading/listening take note of phrases or sentences that strike you (note in your own words the meaning you take from them) You could use a pen if you have the book, highlight the phrases using kindle or Ebooks, or note the time on the YouTube video.

Some questions:

1. Has fleeing or leaving been a reality for you before?
2. Systems and habits that enslave us into trying to manipulate our lives, and saying no to those systems of conformity, projection and slavery sounds big. How might you begin?
3. How can we flee from projections/expectations/control we put on others?
4. Running from what's easy – the giving and accepting roles from one another - How does this present a new way of being for you?
5. How does the language you experience, reading, hearing, speaking affect the way you relate to others?
6. Listening for the true speech, God's word in the harmonics of creation: how might you tune in with the first words spoken?
7. If we imagine that we can successfully go about making space for people, echoing God's invitation to relationship, what might the results feel like?
8. Do you like the idea of using hesitation in speech to create the life-giving gap? Why/Why not?
9. How might you work on your training in listening?
10. How can the Church help to shift the sin of self-talk, control and projection, and flee back into stillness - the landscape of truth?

Session 4: 17th March

Meeting on zoom at 6pm we will share Day 29 of the ABM app, reflect on Chapter 3 'Fleeing' and share our thoughts.

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Before Session 5:

Read Chapter 4 'Staying' or listen to the 'Staying podcast'. Or both!

While reading/listening take note of phrases or sentences that strike you (note in your own words the meaning you take from them) You could use a pen if you have the book, highlight the phrases using kindle or Ebooks, or note the time on the YouTube video.

Some questions:

1. Staying and faithfulness. What do these two words mean for you?
2. Have you experiences of boredom, listlessness or frustration that you can reflect on to relate to the desert space?
3. Can you relate to the brother who struggled with his own frustrations and broke his water jug in solitude, learning that wherever he was, his anger would be also, unless he worked on it?
4. If holiness is 'doing the next thing' and we can't hurry the process of growth, how might you embrace where you are right now?
5. Do you like the idea that being solitary is being completely honest before God? Is there anything you would bring before God now in unguarded honesty?
6. If we are running from unreality to reality, how can you make this your place?
7. Can you consider yourself 'Pledged to here'?
8. What does your fidelity to God and God in this space look like?
9. How can we be the 'real church' recognizing that only in togetherness does healing happen?
10. How has this study challenged your idea of holiness?

Session 5: 24th March

Meeting on zoom at 6pm we will share Day 36 of the ABM app, reflect on Chapter 4 'staying' and end our study together, ready for holy week.

If you can't make the sessions but would like to share your thoughts with the rest of the group please feel welcome to submit your reflections to jamee.callard@anglicanchurchsq.org.au to be included in the study.