PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

Video clip "Cheaper By The Dozen"
breakfast.
Tea lights
White board,
markers, eraser

Snacks
Scripture Cards
Journals
Devotion Guides

WORKSHOP: HEALTHY HOLY HABITS

By Jennifer Wake

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: Sometimes life is overwhelming. It helps when we are grounded in our relationship with God, one day at a time. But how can we develop holy habits without becoming overwhelmed? What are holy habits? How can we develop holy habits without becoming overwhelmed? Holy healthy habits are purposeful listening to God, purposeful talking to God and purposeful talking about God. This workshop explores the realm of "devotions" with a heaping dose of grace.

CONTEXT: This workshop is for any Protestant Women of the Chapel group. It can be used for a program or any training venue and is applicable for ladies of any age. The material can be broken into two parts to be used at consecutive board meetings.

TIME: 75 minutes

HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE: (5-7 Minutes)

Show the video clip from "Cheaper by the Dozen" depicting breakfast time with normal chaos.

My house does not have 12 kids but sometimes I feel like my life is out of control and I can relate to the movie. Has your life ever been like this?

When we make time for God, sometimes our days go better, sometimes not. Practicing healthy holy habits will help with days that go well but will especially help with those days that do not. Whether your day goes well or poorly, God is still with you, He can bring peace to your chaos, and wants to be an integral part of your life. He is faithful to be with us no matter what is going on. Many times during the chaos with little ones, our time with God may be cut short or not at all like we envision. God honors *any* time with Him.

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MAKE YOUR POINT 1: **PURPOSEFUL LISTENING TO GOD** (10 Minutes)

Psalm 105:4 Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face continually.

Note to Trainer: Insert your own personal story here. A window into your life will be much more impacting to your listeners than reading someone else's story that your participants likely do not know.

My story about being a mom of young children:

"I was a mom with 3 kids under 7, living in Germany while my hubby was deployed. I shared with my Bible study that I was too busy to do a long quiet time so I was using verses on cards to help me spend time with God. Another lady in the class commented, "You must spend at least 30 minutes a day with the Word of God." I felt very guilty for MANY years. I was also told that I should get up extra early in the morning to spend time with God before my day began, after all, "All true, growing Christians start their day with a long quiet time with God," or so I was told. For a long time I beat myself up about how I must not love God because I could not get up to pray and study early. Part of the problem was that my kids would hear me move and they would wake up and start their day with me…even to this day.

Let's look up how to do a "Quiet Time" in the Bible

You may opt to ask your participants where a "quiet time" is defined in the Bible. They will likely come up with bits and pieces of what has become a popular catch phrase in Christian culture but will be hard-pressed to find any sort of list or definition of what constitutes a proper quiet time.

While there are elements of what could be called a "quiet time" (Jesus- when He pulled away to pray, David worshipping, King Josiah- studying the Book of Law) there is no passage in Scripture that lays out the rules and regulations, telling us *exactly* what we should do to have a proper quiet time. There are lots of rules in the Bible about other parts of life. If this topic is so important, why isn't it listed and explained? People talk about it like it is easy to do and do daily, yet many people spend years struggling over what their quiet time should look like, how long it should be, where it should be, what time of day it should be, etc.

Perhaps one reason that the Bible is not direct on the subject is that we are all unique. How we learn, how we are wired, how we focus, what reaches our heart, how we interact with God, what our family situation is, and what

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stage of life we find ourselves in are all unique. The ultimate goal is that we connect with God in a meaningful way that causes us to grow in our relationship with Him. Personal practices that encourage growth come in a wide variety. We will explore a few of these practices together.
Take some time to brainstorm ways to spend time in God's Word. Use a white board or chart paper to record your participants' ideas. These ideas may include things like: Podcasts (that can be listened to while cleaning or working out), reading plans, using a Kindle, websites with daily devotions…

One practice for Purposeful Listening:

- ***Lectio Divina*** **(Latin for "Divine Reading") is an ancient spiritual practice that involves making time and space for God to speak to you. You can take your Bible outside, sit in a lawn chair and read a verse over and over. Or stay inside in a comfy chair. You contemplate various phrases and words. You pay attention to anything that jumps out at you. Then you ask God how He wants you to apply what you learn. And then sit silent, still, knowing that God is… This process may last only a few minutes, or it may be that you will mull over a Scripture verse throughout the day, contemplating the word or phrase that stood out to you and then listening for what God has to say about it. You may want to make note of the verse/ passage and write down what you believe God is speaking to you.** *For more detailed information about Lectio Divina, see the resource included at the end of this document.*

  When we read Scripture we allow God to talk to us. How *much* we read is not important as long as we have connected with God. Are the truths of His Word resonating with you? You can be thinking over a verse at the kitchen sink or in the bathroom (if you get time alone in the bathroom). You may have time to sit still and read…or not. Perhaps your reading will consist of verses written on 3 x 5 cards that you visit throughout the day (one on the bathroom mirror, one on the kitchen cabinet…)

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 1: (10 Minutes)

Have a variety of resources available for women to explore. Be sure to include several types of devotion books, perhaps a few worship choices, and maybe some samples of meditations. You may also want to include some websites that could be helpful-

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participants can use smart phones to check them out. They may share some of their own resources during this time. Give them time to talk, make notes, and peruse books.

MAKE YOUR POINT 2: PURPOSEFUL TALKING TO GOD

(10 Minutes)

Note to Trainer: Again, insert your own example here. Give your participants a window into your world.

My friend Kay told me the story of one of her friends who had young kids. During the afternoon when the children were napping, the mom would go out to their trampoline and lay on it in the sun. Laying in the warmth of the sun in the quiet allowed this mom a few minutes to be still and hear God.

Along with what God is saying to you through Scripture another healthy holy habit is talking to Him. Prayer can be overwhelming. How to pray? What to pray? Positions?

Prayer is a conversation with God. We talk to God but we also must listen to God. If we are just presenting prayer requests and never listening, we will miss some insight from God. We need to share our heart with God. If we are only praying for the needs of others but never sharing our honest feelings, we are missing out on connecting with God.

God speaks in a quiet gentle voice as He did with Elijah. *After the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.* 1 Kings 19:12 (NASB)

***O my Strength, I will sing praises to You, for You, O God are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.* Psalm 59:17**

God uses the Holy Spirit in our hearts to prompt us.

He wants you to learn from His heart and share your heart.

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ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 2: (10 Minutes)

Some examples of different ways to pray:

- **Tea light-** Light a tea light and sit in front of it letting the warmth of it represent the warmth of God's presence. Stay for just a few minutes or linger a little longer if you have the time. You may want to use this time to meditate on a Bible verse that is meaningful to you.
- **Prayer guide-** use a guide/method like ACTS (Adoration Confession Thanksgiving Confession)

- **Facebook-** Note prayer requests. Pay attention to requests or people in the Newsfeed that are rarely there.

- **Multitask-** Pray while folding laundry- praying over each article of clothing. Pray while cooking- praying that God would feed their spirits…

- **Focus-** *(Trainer: Insert your own examples here)* Different objects help me focus on praying. One is a sign with different names of God on it. I pick a name and pray it back to God- such as Elohim—Creator. The name Elohim reminds me of all He has created and reminds me He created me just the way He wants me. I also use family pictures to remind me of specific needs- family members that need salvation or others that have specific prayer requests.

- **Location-** Pray in a location that you enjoy. You may want to reserve a certain location for prayer only- i.e. I only sit in this chair when I'm praying- which may help you get in the right frame of mind more easily.

What works for you? *Allow participants to share what they have discovered that helps them pray. You may want to record their answers, or just encourage your participants to record, in their own notes, what they think would be personally helpful.*

MAKE YOUR POINT 3: **PURPOSEFUL TALKING ABOUT GOD** (10 Minutes)

Sharing prayer requests and answers to prayer help to build our connection with God. He hears us and He answers us.

This can also be sharing what God is doing. You can do this with your kids on a daily basis or through sharing a devotion at Protestant Women Of the

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Chapel. Sharing your story or testimony with a friend can also be a way to purposefully talk about God.

Psalm 22:30 ***Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the next generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.***

- **What are your favorite prayer groups?** *(one-on-one prayer time, small group prayer time, organized groups like Protestant Women of the Chapel or Moms In Prayer).*

Time with other believers is important but must make sure it is focused on God not on gossip.

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 3: (10 Minutes)

Brainstorm: How else can we talk about God?

Ideas to bring up:

- *Meeting over snacks- talking with food seems to allow people to relax and discuss more in-depth topics*
- *Calling on while in carpool lane…time with friends far away*
- *Play dates*

APPLY IT TO LIFE: (5 Minutes)

At the start of any new year, I always seem to set lots of goals then I fail and beat myself up. This workshop is not about setting goals. It is about you and God. Take some time now to think about what we have discussed. Sit and be still. Listen to the Holy Spirit. You don't have to figure out how to change or what to do… just listen and then talk to God and tell Him your heart. He wants you to let Him in and to share with Him.

Note to Trainer: Consider playing a CD of instrumental music to help create a calm atmosphere where your participants can linger for a few minutes.

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LECTIO DIVINA

The Four Parts of Lectio Divina

1. Reading (*Lectio*)
2. Meditating (*Meditatio*)
3. Praying (*Oratio*)
4. Contemplating (*Contemplatio*)

Before You Begin:

- Lectio Divina is one of the easiest things to understand in concept and one of the hardest things to put into practice because so many things distract us and fill our minds when we try to do it! Remember not to beat yourself up if this happens. Some days are better than others.
- Posture:
    - Find a place free of distractions- you may need to get up early or wait until others go to bed
    - Dim the lights; you may choose to light a candle
    - Sit upright, Place your hands in your lap, palms up
- Guidelines on time when beginning:
  Note that time for this practice can range from only a few minutes to times of contemplation throughout the entire day. Below is the traditional timeframe which can be shortened or lengthened, depending on your day, your temperament and the season of life you find yourself in.
    - Reading: 10 minutes
    - Meditating: 10 minutes
    - Praying: 5 minutes
    - Contemplating: 5 minutes
- Choose a passage that is a few lines long
- Resist the temptation to move from meditation into prayer before it is time

READING:

- Read slowly
- Read repeatedly
- Read out loud
- Read silently
- Focus on words and phrases

MEDITATING:

- Meditate on the word or phrase that stood out the most
- What is it causing me to feel? What is it causing me to think?
- What does that phrase mean?
- In what ways do I experience that word or phrase in life?

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PRAYING

- Ask God:
  - "Why did You give me this word today?"
  - "What do You want me to do with what You gave me today?"
  - "Why did I feel this when I meditated on it?"
- Listen for Him to respond

CONTEMPLATING

- "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10
- Contemplation is an act of letting go
- It is an inner quietness, stillness
- It is a time of quieting our bodies and minds for one purpose- resting in God's love
- It is difficult to do

Transitioning out:

- We often need something to help transition us out of this intimate time with the Lord. Sometimes saying the Lord's Prayer or the Nicene Creed can facilitate this.

Nicene Creed (4th Century)

- We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
  of all that is, seen and unseen.
- We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
  begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
  Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
  For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
  he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
  He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
  He has spoken through the Prophets.
  We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
  We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

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PWOC

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I. PURPOSEFUL LISTENING TO GOD

- ***Psalm 105:4 Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face continually.***

- **Let's look up how to do a "Quiet Time" in the Bible**
  - The ultimate goal is that we connect with God in a meaningful way that causes us to grow in our relationship with Him. Personal practices that encourage growth come in a wide variety.

  - *Brainstorm ways to spend time in God's Word:*

  - Lectio Divina- Latin for "Divine Reading"

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II. PURPOSEFUL TALKING TO GOD

- **Prayer is a conversation with God.** We talk to God but we also must listen to God. If we are just presenting prayer requests and never listening, we will miss some insight from God. We need to share our heart with God. If we are only praying for the needs of others but never sharing our honest feelings, we are missing out on connecting with God.

- **I Kings 19:12, Psalm 59:17**

SOME EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT WAYS TO PRAY:

- **Tea light-** Light a tea light and sit in front of it letting the warmth of it represent the warmth of God's presence. Stay for just a few minutes or linger a little longer if you have the time. You may want to use this time to meditate on a Bible verse that is meaningful to you.

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- **What works for you?**

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III. PURPOSEFUL TALKING ABOUT GOD

- **Prayer Groups**- sharing requests *and* answers to prayers
- **PWOC Devotion**
- **Sharing your Testimony**
- **Psalm 22:30**
- ***How else can we talk about God?***

APPLY IT TO LIFE: *What is God speaking to your heart? What would you like to say to Him? Take a few minutes to be still in His presence.*

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  For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
  he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
  He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
  He has spoken through the Prophets.
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  We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

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