

**SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE MINISTERING PERSON**  
**MS 3XM3/6XM6**

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Summer School 2016  
 Mondays and Wednesdays 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
 Class Days: Monday, June 6; Wednesday June 8  
 Monday, June 13; Wednesday, June 15  
 Monday, June 20; Wednesday, June 22

Specializations: PS, CW, CS  
 (Pastoral Studies, Christian Worldview, Counselling and Spiritual Care)

### **Description**

Too busy to pray? Or too busy not to pray? Too stressed to listen for God's voice? Or too stressed not to listen for God's voice? We may, like the psalmist, pray for an undivided heart, but how is having an undivided heart even possible when life or ministry becomes fragmented? This course is designed to lead us towards rich and nuanced principles and practices of spiritual life that are essential for our own spiritual depth and critical for meaningful ministry to others. Whether we are involved in full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer ministry, each of us needs to guard and tend to the viability and vitality of our spiritual life. In this course, we will explore how Jesus' voice in the Beatitudes may guide our spiritual paths, not as morals but as stops on a journey. We will stop and listen to hear where God is already at work in our lives and where he longs to be. We will develop personal life/mission/ministry prayers that integrate the various roles and compartments of our lives into an integrated prayer of the undivided and undistracted heart. We will investigate the role of lament in fostering spiritual depth. We will explore the diversity of postures and attitudes of prayer that take us from the ends of ourselves to the heart of God. We will weigh the role of vibrant – or missing – spiritual disciplines in our daily lives. We will engage in focused writing and projects to help facilitate a life-long journey of deepening spiritual life.

### **Knowing**

- our spiritual selves more fully
- the nature of being human (e.g. un-spiritual)
- more about the nature of God
- more about Jesus
- what Jesus reveals about discipleship in the Beatitudes
- more about the challenges of being a ministering person, whether professional or volunteer, and how to tend to the depth of our own spiritual lives

### **Being**

- more about being in the presence of God
- more about being ourselves in the presence of God

- more about being transformed into God's design
- more about being present to another pilgrim on the journey
- exploring our being-in-God-ness
- being attentive to God's still small voice in our lives

### **Doing**

- developing a personal life / mission / ministry prayer
- refining our ability to see God at work in us, around us, and in others
- identifying gaps in our spiritual lives
- developing a Spirit-led approach to addressing these spiritual gap(s) in our own lives
- developing a sensitive approach to addressing the spiritual gap(s) in others' lives

### **Class 1, Monday, June 6**

Syllabus, Sign-Ups (the earliest ones may be done by email prior to the beginning of class)

Introduction to "The Spiritual Life of the Ministering Person."

Introduction to the Beatitudes.

Introduction to Life Mission/Ministry Prayers.

Personal Reflection – Identifying Spiritual Gaps (personal focus area for this course.)

### **Class 2, Wednesday, June 8**

Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Student-Led Reflection and Worship Segment #1

Matthew 5:4: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Student-Led Reflection and Worship Segment #2

Topics:

- Beatitude 1
- Beatitude 2
- The place of lament in the ministering person's life.

### **Class 3, Monday, June 13**

Matthew 5:5: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

Student-Led Reflection and Worship Segment #3

Matthew 5:6: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Student-Led Reflection and Worship Segment #4

Topics:

- Beatitude 3
- Beatitude 4
- The reflective life of the ministering person.

### **Class 4, Wednesday, June 15**

Matthew 5:7: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”  
Student-Led Reflection and Worship Segment #5

Matthew 5:8: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”  
Student-Led Reflection and Worship Segment #6

Topics:

- Beatitude 5
- Beatitude 6
- Expressive forms of spiritual renewal.

### **Class 5, Monday, June 20**

Matthew 5:9: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”  
Student-Led Reflection and Worship Segment #7

Matthew 5:10 (10–12): “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”)  
Student-Led Reflection and Worship Segment #8

Topics:

- Beatitude 7
- Beatitude 8
- Prayer and the spiritual life.

### **Class 6, Wednesday, June 22**

Spiritual Exercise and Reflection: In-Class Presentations.

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## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**Note:** Memorize Matthew 5:1–12. No marks assigned.

### **1. RESEARCH AND REFLECTION MINI-PAPERS.**

Provide evidence of reading and research as well as thoughtful personal insight on each Beatitude. How does this Beatitude connect with your own spiritual life and formation? What insights do you have into this Beatitude? Provide approximately 1–2 pages [300 words] per verse/section, for each of the eight Beatitudes. These are due on the day that they are addressed in class: the first two are due on the second class day, the next two on the third class day, the next two on the fourth class day, and the final two on the fifth class day. Interact with Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon on the Mount*, and at least one other author or a significant commentary for each one. Use these same resources for each one, but develop your own responses to the text, as

well. Show a deep sense of spiritual awareness and reflection on your own life as well as on the church or world around you.

**Length: 2400 (8 x 300 words each).**

**Due: As addressed in class, on days 2, 3, 4, and 5.**

**Mark: 20%**

## **2. IN-CLASS DEVOTIONAL WORSHIP SEGMENT.**

Plan and lead a 10-minute devotional worship segment in class, based on the Beatitude you select on the sign-up sheet. There will be two of these on each of class days 2, 3, 4, and 5. The first two will take place during the second class (Wednesday, June 8). Design this segment to involve the rest of the class as fully and meaningfully as possible. You may include music but music is not required. Class size will determine if these are led individually, or by two or more people. (Each collaborator must be involved in the planning and leadership in some demonstrable way.)

**Length: 10 minutes in-class time (max).**

**Mark: 15%**

## **3. LIFE MISSION/MINISTRY PRAYER.**

Identify 5–7 areas or roles in your life around which you will craft thoughtful personal prayer. These areas may include such things as being a daughter/son, parent, spouse, friend, colleague, student, teacher, mentor, pastor, counselor, social worker, care-giver, business owner, etc. Include at least one that specifically addresses your identity in Christ or God. Thoughtfully begin to craft a prayer around each of these that captures the heart of who you are and who God wants you to be in this area. For each, identify how you desire to meet with God – or how God desires to meet with you – and how he wants to work in and through you. Submit a rough draft of this on Class Day 3 (Monday, June 13). There is no specific word count for this assignment, but every word must count, and be there for a reason. Evaluation will be on the basis of showing thoughtful honesty and serious wrestling with issues, and choosing your words well, not on whether it sounds like you have everything together spiritually. You may give this prayer the title that is most appropriate for you.

**Length: As required.**

**Rough Draft Due: Class Day 3, Monday, June 13**

**Final Draft Due: Last Class Day, Wednesday, June 22, 2016.**

**Mark: 15%**

## **4. BOOK RESPONSE**

Choose one book that addresses some of the specific spiritual concerns that you have about your life, and/or that you think is relevant to your life as a ministering person, and that fits within your specialization (PS: Pastoral Studies, CW: Christian Worldview, CS: Counselling and Spiritual Care). Respond to 2 or 3 issues or ideas that are presented. Do not simply recount what the book says, but find specific areas that challenge you or are new or beneficial in some way. You do not need to agree with the author, but do provide evidence of careful thinking and evaluation. You may submit a written response or an audio or video response.

**Length: Written: 750–1000 words. Spoken: 7-10 minutes maximum.**

**Mark: 10%**

**Due: Class Day 4, Wednesday, June 15, 2016**

### **5. SPIRITUAL EXERCISE AND REFLECTION: IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS.**

Prayerfully plan a specific spiritual exercise that you will engage in during the first week or two of the course. This spiritual exercise should address an area of need in your own spiritual life that God has brought to mind. Your spiritual exercise may be a silent retreat, a walk in the woods or on a waterfront with a specific prayer plan or a Scripture verse for meditation, a focused photo-walk in a downtown area, a spiritually-motivated drawing or painting, a personal hour of concentrated meditation on Scripture, writing of a worship song, etc. Carve out the time necessary to follow through on your plan, and engage fully in it. Then thoughtfully reflect on what was or was not accomplished through this exercise. Was it a good plan? Why or why not? Did you follow through on it fully? Did you encounter God in the process? Why or why not? Has this experience brought any insight into your spiritual life? Has it influenced how you might assist someone else in their spiritual journey? If you were to do it again, or were to invite someone else to participate with you in it, how would you do it differently? Is there something here that would help you to mentor someone else in their spiritual life?

Evaluation for this assignment is on the depth and honesty of your reflection, not on whether the exercise was a “success” or not. Your reflection may include visuals, but these are not required. This will be the basis of our shared experience on the last day of class.

**Length: 10-minute informal presentation.**

**Due: Last day of class, Wednesday, June 22, 2016.**

**Mark: 20%**

### **6. THE BEATITUDES AND SPIRITUAL LIFE: (a.) PAPER OR (b.) PROJECT.**

**(a.) Paper:** Develop a life template of spiritual disciplines or life-views based on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1–12). Why would you frame them in the way that you do? How would these, should these, and do these influence your life? How would you use them to assist someone else (individual, small group, congregation, etc.) that you would normally encounter? Provide evidence of research (MDC guidelines: 10 sources) but also show deep and reflective thinking.

**Paper Length: 2500 words.**

**(b.) Project:** In consultation with the professor, choose a project that allows you to creatively present the Beatitudes in a meaningful way as it represents or impacts your spiritual life, and the life of others. Show evidence of a thoughtful and reflective approach in the design and implementation of your project. Also provide a written paper (750–1000 words) that describes the thinking behind your project and how your project portrays what you are trying to say or depict.

**Project Length: As determined in consultation with the professor.**

**Accompanying Paper: 750–1000 words.**

**Paper or Project Due: Wednesday, July 20, 2016 (4 weeks after the final class day).**

**Mark: 20%**

### **Textbooks**

Foster, Richard Foster. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. San Francisco: HarperOne,

1992.  
 Lloyd–Jones, Martyn. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*. London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1959.  
 Nouwen, Henri. *Creative Ministry*. Image, New York, 2003.

Plus:

One other authored book or commentary on the Beatitudes / Sermon on the Mount.  
 One book that represents your area of specialization and some aspect of spiritual life as a ministering person – to be chosen in consultation with the professor.

Suggested Additional Reading:

Ackerman, John. *Listening to God: Spiritual Formation in Congregations*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2001.  
 Packer, J. I., and Carolyn Nystrom. *Praying: Finding Our Way through Duty to Delight*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.  
 Willard, Dallas. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Updated and expanded. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1984, 2012.

### **\*\* Statement on Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ [www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php](http://www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php).

### **Gender Inclusive Language**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

**Please Note: This syllabus is the property of the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.**