

# Centering God and Self



## Topics



1. How Men Find God
2. Finding True North
3. Spiritual Gifts and Talents
4. When Self-Worth Is Challenged
5. Seeking Balance
6. From Success to Significance



## HOW MEN FIND GOD

*For one meeting*

**Objective:** *To share experiences and find common ground in our search for God.*

### **Preparation**

Come to the meeting prepared to share the story of how and why you considered joining a men's faith group. How is this part of your broader faith journey? What do you hope to find in the group and on your journey?

### **Opening Prayer**

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
Nor do I really know myself,  
and the fact that I think that I am following your  
will  
does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you does in  
fact please you.  
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am  
doing.

—Thomas Merton

## Humor

I admire the serene assurance of those who have religious faith. It is wonderful to observe the calm confidence of a Christian with four aces.

—Mark Twain

## Guidance

How do men find God? We find God alone and in groups. We find God at work and on the sports field, especially when we pray for miracles. And we find God at home, out in nature and, occasionally, in traffic. There is no universal avenue or end point where all men find God, but there is one constant. We find God in the way that we seek God. God is everywhere and is waiting for us to find him in the most public and private of places. The key, of course, is to *engage* in the search, which is why we gather together. This men's faith group, if we invest in it, can be one way to bring God into our lives and our lives into God.

As we share our experiences, we will see that we are not alone in our search *and our struggle* for a closer relationship with God. We may be stunningly different on the outside, and even odd—like that one guy with a penchant for scrambled eggs and ketchup—but we share many of the same concerns and longings, such as for a solid family and a meaningful life. We also long for a solid relationship with God. This is the glue that holds these groups together. This commonality is where we begin faith formation with our fellow men. The important thing is to communicate, for that is how we come to know each other and, through others, come to more fully know God.

**Passage From Scripture**

I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

—Matthew 18:19–20

**Food for Thought**

When you want to work for God . . . start a committee. When you want to work with God . . . start a prayer group.

—Corrie ten Boom

**Discussion and Journaling** (*as group or in pairs*)

1. How do you find God? How has this changed over time, from childhood to now? Do you look to God for guidance more or less often than when you were young? Have you left something behind in your relationship with God over the years? What have you gained? What do you want to change, to grow? Where would you like to be in your faith?
2. Share a favorite scripture passage or a prayer, a saint or a sacrament that you may reflect on during the course of the day—the Serenity Prayer when counseling a friend, the beatitudes when setting priorities, or the sacrament of reconciliation after a tough meeting. We have much to learn from each other in this regard, especially the ways other men seek God and, thus, find themselves in the process.

**Exercises** (*leader led*)

Sometimes we seek God and receive the guidance we need (Salvation). Other times we seem to receive no response (Silence). And sometimes, God finds us when we are not looking, in the most unexpected ways (Surprise). On a flip chart, white board, or even a large napkin, write these typical responses to prayer as column headings: Salvation, Silence, and Surprise. Take a few moments to discuss your experience with all three of these responses to prayer, using the suggested questions below.

How do you typically seek God? Through prayer, activity, fellowship? Do you honestly feel God's presence during these times? If so, consider ways that you might reinforce these moments in order to reinforce God's active presence in your life. If not, discuss what might be missing.

Identify a time when you made a clear prayer request for a specific outcome. Describe what happened—was God's response clear or unclear, or did God seem absent? Beneath the column headings identified above, write the prayer request(s) beneath the response(s) that you experienced. Has your experience affected the way you approach God now?

Is there a pattern in the way you seek God? With specific prayer requests or general prayer for guidance? Are you able to discern God's response? Consider ways that we might be more attentive to God's true calling for us.

Is there a pattern in the way God seems to find you? In quiet moments or with family?

Are there patterns in your relationship with God that you would like to change?

## Journal Notes

### **Additional Reading**

*The Hidden Value of a Man* by Gary Smalley and John Trent

"How Men Find God," in *St. Anthony Messenger*, August 2000

*The Christian Husband* by Bob Lepine

*The Seasons of a Man's Life* by Daniel J. Levinson