The World Community for Christian Meditation

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Guidelines for preparing a talk for a group meeting.

The shape of the Christian Meditation meeting follows the following format:

- A short introductory tape of John Main or Laurence Freeman or a passage from their writings.
- If this is difficult, as they are of course in English, a short talk needs to be prepared based on your own reading/listening to John Main and Laurence Freeman, lasting 5 to 15 minutes at the most
- A period of 20 -30 minutes of meditation
- An opportunity to ask questions or air problems with the practice

The very first talk you may have to prepare may well be an introductory talk for a new group. It is important to keep in mind to whom you are speaking ? friends, colleagues, parishioners, or young people - and tailor your talk accordingly.

The following guidelines may be of help to you:
- When you start your talk mention first of all John Main/Laurence Freeman and the WCCM and your connection with it.
- Stress the universality of meditation and place it sensitively in Christian context, mentioning John Main?s rediscovery of this traditional way of prayer in the writings of the Desert Tradition of the 4th century as transmitted by John Cassian in his ?Conferences?.
- Then deal with the three essential points:

1. What is meditation?
2. Why do we meditate?
3. How do we meditate?

- Mention the inevitability of thoughts and the importance of persevering with the practice.
- Finish by mentioning personal reasons for meditating and the effect it has had on your life.

In preparing for this talk and subsequent ones the following hints extracted from the video ?Communication Skills? prepared by Fergal McLoughlin, the Irish national coordinator, may be of use:

- Prepare carefully for the talk by jotting down all the ideas you want to share.
- Select from these ideas three or four main points at the most. Put them in order to give shape to the talk, then work out how you will develop each point, including any examples, stories, and quotes you may want to use.
- Write down your main points as a series of bold headings. Add notes under each heading to remind you of what you want to say, including any quotes you might be using, then speak from these notes.
- You will communicate best with the audience if you have eye contact with them and sound natural, so try not to read out a finished script if you can.
- Think about whether you can be heard clearly. Does your voice tend to be soft or loud, fast or slow in normal conversation? Do you tend to speak more softly or loudly, faster or slower when you are nervous?
- Remember that you are not on your own: the Spirit is with you!

The objective of these ?Letters? is to give you a good basis to start your sharing about the Journey of Meditation. But there are many more resources available for you. If your mother tongue is not English do check on your national website or with your national coordinator what resources exist in translation.

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