

Start the New Year Right!

Here we are! The start of 2024. I don't know about you, but 2023 seemed to be a blur. It moved at light-speed and there were many significant events throughout the year.

Last January, the first edition of Monday Meditations asked a few questions that were intended to promote reflection from the previous year, and also to spur thoughts and plans for the year ahead.

I received quite a few positive comments about that particular entry, so I thought we would do the same again albeit with a new format, new questions and a "challenge" at the end.

I encourage you to take some time to individually reflect on these questions and ideas and write down your thoughts. Then, with your Corpath Forum group, plan to share them with transparency.

Remember, writing down the answers to these questions will also create an "end of year record" for you to keep and review in the future.

Let's get started...

Reflection on the Past Year

The first part of the exercise is to have each member think about the year "that was". No doubt your group has made some key discussions and maybe has shared experiences that are memorable for all of you. Take some time to reflect on them together. Use the following three subtopics as a guide:

Gratitude: *Have each member to share one or two things they are grateful for from the past year. This sets a positive and reflective tone for the remainder of the discussion.*

Testimonials: *Have your forum group member share testimonies about how their faith influenced their personal lives, business decisions, and outcomes in the past year.*

Challenges and Lessons Learned: *Discuss any challenges faced by the group or individual members, and the lessons learned from those experiences. Emphasize the role of faith in overcoming challenges.*

Looking Ahead to the Next Year

Take a few moments to discuss your thoughts about what the next six months (or year) might hold for you individually, your business, and your forum group. Here are some ideas of activities you can do as you spend time looking ahead:

Vision Casting: *Share the group's vision and mission, reiterating the Corpath values and principles to help guide your collective endeavours. Discuss any areas in which your group can become more deliberate and intentional in adding spiritual, personal, and professional value to your meetings.*

Prayer for Guidance: *Dedicate time to pray collectively and specifically for guidance and wisdom in the upcoming year, both for individual needs, businesses, and the group as a whole.*

Set Spiritual Goals: *Encourage members to set spiritual goals for they year. Help each other commit to progressing in faith in their businesses and personal lives, and aligning them with Christian values. Share your goals with each other.*

As mentioned above, this edition of Monday Meditations has an activity for your individual group. This activity will take some time to organize, but I do believe it will be worth the effort.

Group Spiritual Activity Suggestion: Share Communion

Sharing communion together can be a significant experience for a group of Christians, especially business leaders. Through this sacred act, your group will experience spiritual unity, while collectively remembering and honouring the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that underpins your shared faith. The act of shared communion emphasizes the acknowledgment of God's presence in your personal and professional lives, and encourages renewing commitments to Christian values. It also encourages the group to seek divine guidance and wisdom for the tasks challenges ahead.

I believe it's important for us, as Corpath members, to start the year with a posture of piety, reverence, and a humility that looks to God for divine guidance and direction as we strive to lead our families and our businesses in ways that reflect our Christian values.

For your convenience, here is an outline and brief instructions on how to share communion with forum group. One person can lead the entire experience, or several can share the responsibilities.

Communion Experience Outline:

Opening Prayer: Begin the communion service with a prayer, asking for God's presence and guidance.

Scripture Reading: Read a passage of Scripture that emphasizes the significance of communion. A suitable choice is **1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (ESV):**

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Explanation of Communion: Emphasize the remembrance, gratitude, and the acknowledgment of Christ's sacrifice.

Bread and Wine (or Juice) Preparation: Distribute small pieces of bread or crackers and cups of wine or grape juice to each participant.

Blessing of the Bread: Lead the group in giving thanks for the bread, using words such as:

"Blessed are you, our Lord and God. As we partake of this bread, we remember the body of Your Son and our Lord Jesus Christ that was broken for us."

Sharing of the Bread: Pass the bread (or cracker)s around the group. Each person takes a piece but waits to partake until all have been served.

Blessing of the Cup: Give thanks for the cup, saying:

"Blessed are you, God our Father. As we drink from this cup, we remember the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of our sins."

Sharing of the Cup: Distribute the cups to the group. Similar to the bread, participants wait until all have been served before drinking.

Reflection and Personal Prayer: Allow a moment of silent reflection and personal prayer as participants commune with God individually.

Closing Prayer: Conclude with a closing prayer, expressing gratitude for the shared experience and asking for God's continued presence.

Important Considerations: Ensure that all participants understand the symbolic nature and spiritual significance of communion. If someone cannot or prefers not to partake, encourage them to still join in the service as a time of reflection and prayer.

Conclusion

If your group has taken time to go through the time of reflection and has also participated in sharing communion together, I would love to hear about your experience. Send me a note. Give me a call. Share your thoughts with me.

As we start the new year, let me offer this prayer for you:

Dear Heavenly Father,

We gather before You today united by our faith in You and common purpose. As we reflect on the past year and anticipate the journey ahead, we seek Your presence and guidance in every step we take.

Lord, we thank You for the challenges that have strengthened us, the victories that have humbled us, and the lessons that have shaped us. We acknowledge Your sovereignty over our lives and businesses, trusting that Your plans for us are good.

Grant us the wisdom in the year ahead to navigate the complexities of our roles with integrity and compassion. May our decisions be guided by Your truth, and may our actions reflect the love and grace that You have shown us. In moments of uncertainty, remind us that Your light will always pierce through the darkness.

Father, we lift up our fellow members in our forum groups. Bless them with resilience in the face of challenges, creativity in problem-solving, and discernment in decision-making. Let Your peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and minds.

As we embark on the journey in the year ahead, fill us with a spirit of unity, collaboration, and unwavering faith. May we be vessels through which Your love and goodness are manifested in the world. Encourage us to be beacons of light in our homes and our workplaces, reflecting Your love and grace to those around us.

Lord, strengthen our commitment to steward our businesses in a manner that honours You. Help us to recognize the impact we can have on our communities and the lives of those we serve. May our work be a testimony to Your glory.

We place our hopes and aspirations for the coming year into Your hands, trusting that with You, all things are possible.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, we pray.

Amen.

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