

From Pastor Marissa Becklin

Navigating The Media Landscape: A Prayerful Approach

In a world inundated with media messages clamoring for our attention, it is essential for us as Christians to approach our consumption of media with discernment and wisdom. Just as we seek guidance and direction in our daily lives through prayer and scripture, so too should we turn to God in prayer before engaging with the various forms of media that surround us—be they television, radio, print, film, social media, podcasts, etc. The words and opinions of this world are human, not holy, and we do well (especially as we approach the media onslaught before an election this fall) to ask for God’s guidance, peace, and wisdom as we wade through it all.

Below I am sharing with you a “Liturgy for Before Consuming Media”. I invite you to tear this out of your print newsletter or pick up a copy at church in the back of the Sanctuary, so that you can put it on your fridge or somewhere in your home as a guide for prayer over the next number of months. Prayer is a habit that we develop and build, and at first it will feel strange to stop and pray before every time you open your phone to scroll the news or Facebook, or every time you turn on the TV or radio, or open the newspaper. In time, I hope that this habit becomes natural to you, and that you become comfortable enough with the prayer that you don’t need to lean on the words of this liturgy anymore—I hope that you’ll develop your own short prayer that works for you.

The truth is that there are SO many words, opinions, angry messages, and fights out there vying for our attention. Our country is quite polarized right now, and our political parties (all of them) benefit from us feeling afraid and angry, because those feelings motivate us. God calls us away from these feelings, though, and invites us instead into a position of prayerful peace. We cannot listen to the still, small voice of God guiding us if we are shouting, or if our ears are ringing with fear and rage.

God *is* with us, beloved. Always. And God is accompanying us through these months ahead, calling us to patience, curiosity, and to the task of listening to God and one another. May we be guided by the Holy Spirit to discern that which is true, noble and uplifting, and to recognize and reject that which is deceitful or harmful.

A Liturgy Before Consuming Media

O Discerning Spirit, who alone judges all things rightly, now be present in my mind and active in my imagination as I prepare to engage with the claims and questions of broken human beings.

Shape my vision by yours, and tutor me, Holy Spirit, that I might learn to discern the difference between those stories that are whole, echoing the greater narrative of your redemption, and those that are bent or broken, failing to trace accurately the patterns of your eternal thoughts and so failing to name rightly the true condition of humanity and all of creation.

Grant me wisdom to divide rightly. Bless me with the great discernment to be able to celebrate the stamp of your divine image.

Guard my mind against the old enticement to believe a lie simply because it is beautifully told. Let me not be careless.

Give me right conviction to judge my own motives in that which I approve, teaching me to be always mindful of that which I consume, and thoughtful of the ways in which I consume it.

Impart to me keener knowledge of the limits of my own heart in light of my own particular brokenness, that I might choose what would be for my flourishing and not for my harm.

Let my own freedoms in Christ never be flaunted or exercised in such a way as to give cause for confusion, temptation, or stumbling in others.

May the stories I partake of, and the ways in which I engage with them, make me in the end a more empathetic Christ-bearer, more compassionate, more aware of my own brokenness and need for grace, better able to understand the hopes and fears and failings of my fellow humans, so that I might more authentically live and learn and love among them unto the end that all of our many stories might be more beautifully woven into your own greater story. Amen.

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In Christ's Love, Pastor Marissa