

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.  
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching  
Guard the sharing

# Male Call

## February 22, 2008—*The Prodigal Son—Part IIIa—the Father (as God)*

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reflections on the lost sons...</li> <li>2) Context of the parable—what is the precipitating event?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Lk 15:1-3</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) The Prodigal Son             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Luke 15:11-32</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) Rembrandt's <i>The Return of the Prodigal Son</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Brief reflection on the painting</li> <li>b) Painting represents “stillness” (cf Ps 46:10), not the action of the parable:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Be still and know that I am God</li> <li>ii) Be still and know</li> <li>iii) Be still</li> <li>iv) Be                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) What does it mean for us to <i>be</i> with God, with all that we really are fully exposed, as the younger son is with his father in the painting?</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>5) The Father             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Characteristics he exhibits?                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Aching</li> <li>ii) Longing</li> <li>iii) Loving</li> <li>iv) Freeing</li> <li>v) Compassionate</li> </ol> </li> <li>b) The Father threw a party! (Quick to forgive!)                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) See two previous parables: lost sheep, lost coin</li> <li>ii) Zech 3:1-5 (Joshua's iniquity taken away and given new clothes)</li> <li>iii) Isa 6:1-7 (Isaiah's iniquity taken away and sin forgiven)</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>6) Our response to the Father:  How am I to find God?                      How am I to let myself be found by him?  How am I to know God?                      <b>OR</b> How am I to let myself be known by God?  How am I to love God?                      How am I to let myself be loved by God?</p> <p>7) How do we relate to God?  a) Examples<sup>1</sup></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="300 451 1432 640"> <tr> <td>Omnipotent Creator</td> <td>Benevolent Grandfather</td> <td>Helper in Time of Need</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Judge</td> <td>Brother</td> <td>Friend</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leader/Guide</td> <td>Standard of Truth</td> <td>Father</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Beloved</td> <td>King</td> <td>Mystery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Negotiator</td> <td>Absent Landlord</td> <td>Others?</td> </tr> </table> <p>b) What is your “idealized” image of God?</p> <p>c) What is your “operational” image of God, how you <i>actually</i> relate with him?</p> <p>8) For personal reflection  a) Why am I hiding from God?  i) As the <i>younger</i> brother:  (1) What is my resistance to returning home?  ii) As the <i>older</i> brother:  (1) What is my resistance to joining the party?  b) What is my resistance to entering a joyful life with God?</p> <p>9) Journey together  a) With a partner, talk about some of the things that came to your mind.  b) Ask each other how you can pray for the other.  c) Pray for each other.</p>	Omnipotent Creator	Benevolent Grandfather	Helper in Time of Need	Judge	Brother	Friend	Leader/Guide	Standard of Truth	Father	Beloved	King	Mystery	Negotiator	Absent Landlord	Others?
Omnipotent Creator	Benevolent Grandfather	Helper in Time of Need														
Judge	Brother	Friend														
Leader/Guide	Standard of Truth	Father														
Beloved	King	Mystery														
Negotiator	Absent Landlord	Others?														
7:00	Closing Prayer															

Further reading:

- *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*, Henri Nouwen
- *The Better Part*, Thomas Keating
- *Your God is Too Small*, J.P. Phillips

---

<sup>1</sup> *Imago Christi*, Spiritual Formation Discovery Retreat Participant Guide.