

Spiritual Practices

Yearning

Facilitator _____

Date _____

Chalice/Candle Lighting

Our longing is an echo of the divine longing for us. Our longing is the living imprint of divine desire.

— John O'Donohue in *Eternal Echoes*

Check-in/Sharing

An Excerpt from *Words of Common Sense for Mind, Body and Soul* by Brother David Steindl-Rast

Brother David Steindl-Rast salutes proverbs as cross-cultural wisdom that appeals to our common sense. Here is an excerpt on the spiritual practice of yearning.

"Jesus, if he came back today, might look bewildered at what has become of the movement that he started. Would he recognize it at all? Would he think it has much to do with the message he preached? I think he would feel more at home in a twelve-step meeting than in most churches, let alone in the Vatican. . . . Twelve-step programs rely on no other authority than common sense. Jesus would recognize his spirit alive and active today as soon as he walked into a twelve-step meeting. This should not surprise us, since the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous were fervent Christians. And there is an even deeper connection between sobriety and common sense. Don't we call people who use common sense 'sober minded'? What then is the addiction that makes most of us, again and again, fall off the wagon of common sense? It must be an enormously strong addiction to draw so many into its spell.

"What is it that attracts us with such power? For many years I was searching for an answer to this question. What is the desire that draws us away from common sense? Gradually, the answer dawned on me: It is our longing to belong. But does not this deep desire in the human heart aim precisely at that all-embracing communion from which common sense springs? Isn't our homesickness a desire for the cosmic household of which common sense is the family spirit? Indeed it is. But we fail to go all the way. We settle too soon, settle for less, before we reach our true home."

Questions: Share a story about the ways in which your desire has expressed itself in a relationship, in a creative project, or at work.

Check-out/Likes and Wishes

Closing Words:

Longing is a compass that guides us through life. We may never get what we really want, that's true, but every step along the way will be determined by it.

— Joan D. Chittister in *The Psalms: Meditations for Every Day of the Year*

To Practice This Thought: In what directions are your yearnings pointing you?

Group Session Plan based on resources from www.spiritualityandpractice.com