

## Seasons of the Soul

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1 ESV)

### Ordinary Time

#### Season of Ordinary Light

- Marked by general contentment – things are going well
- Easier to recognize God’s favor/to feel blessed
- Also easier to coast, become lazy, and think we can handle life
- Great time for spiritual rest and gaining strength for challenges that will inevitably come our way

#### Reflection

- Reflect on the faithfulness of God
- Note things for which you are grateful
- Remember this season is from God
- Ask God for what you need to live fully, joyfully, with love and compassion?
- Express your heart to God in a praise psalm

#### Season of Ordinary Darkness

- Marked by being emotionally or spiritually “flat.”
- Not tied to any discernable circumstance
- Not deep darkness but feel bored and stagnant
- Long for prior times when God seemed so close

#### Reflection

- Remember that these times are normal
- Stay faithful; put one foot in front of the other
- Trust that the Spirit is at work
- Have a conversation with God about how you feel and ask him to reveal things that might be hidden or give understanding where you feel confused.
- Ask God to fill you with his freshness and vitality

### Heightened Time

#### Season of Suffering and Lament

- All of us go through seasons of deep suffering – uninvited and unwanted
- Have feelings of disorientation, uncertainty, doubt, fear, anxiety
- We fall apart, become aware of our brokenness, and want to give up
- Usually lasts much longer than we would like
- Can be a season of transformation and inner journey with God
- We can resist the work of the Spirit by turning away from God

#### Reflection

- Use a lament psalm to give language for conversation with God  
Psalm 6; 13; 22; 35; 39; 42-43; 88; 102

- Allow yourself to feel your loss, grief, or sadness
- Notice any anger towards or distrust of God
- Take note of your sin and willfulness; confess it to God
- Turn from asking “why is this happening” to “where are you God in this for me”
- Let go of resisting, clutching and relying on yourself
- Ask God to allow you to let go, receive, wait, trust, be transformed
- Reflect on a past time of darkness and see how God was faithful

### **Season of Celebration**

- Time of great joy, celebration, victory, living in the flow of the Spirit

#### Reflection

- Savor the experience
- Give thanks to God
- Express yourself in praise and worship – write a praise psalm
- Plan a memorial – gathering, pictures
- Do the dance of joy

### **Season of Wilderness or Transition**

- Time of change – letting go and waiting for what is next
- Victor Turner called this season “liminal space,” meaning “threshold”
- We are betwixt and between; left one room, not yet entered the next
- Ending - can leave us with a sense of loss and grief; accepting the change
- Waiting - can be a time of disorientation; can experience confusion and despair but it is also a time of deepening dependence on God
- New beginnings – a reorientation of our life; not just external; takes courage to enter fully without looking behind us
- Very teachable and holy space

#### Reflection

- Stay put – don’t try and force it, analyze it, or figure it out
- Wait actively - listen to God and what he wants for your life at this time
- Talk to God about your fears, hopes, dreams, and questions
- Be aware daily of what is dying, what you are being invited to surrender
- Let go of controlling the outcome
- Invite trusted people to walk through the process with you
- Reflect on the journeys of Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, Israel, Jonah, Paul