Introvert Charismatic

Prayer

Mark Tanner
1 Kings 19

• God loves to meet with His children
• There is no one way He meets with us
• There are times He meets us in the silence of reflection, but He always draws us out to Himself
• Encounter is known by its fruits
But... is this prayer?

“Prayer is the practice of the presence of God. It is the place where pride is abandoned, hope is lifted, and supplication is made. Prayer is the place of admitting our need, of adopting humility, and claiming dependence upon God. Prayer is the needful practice of the Christian. Prayer is the exercise of faith and hope. Prayer is the privilege of touching the heart of the Father through the Son of God, Jesus our Lord.”

(Matt Slick, www.carm.org)
But... is this prayer?

“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.”

(St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Manuscrits autobiographiques*).
Some cautions...

• Be careful with the Bible
• Not pigeon-holing
• Not giving out badges...
• Not awarding points...
What do we mean?

• What is an introvert?
A healthy introvert, then, is one with a strong and sustaining internal life. We have discovered that our energy is replenished in the quiet and deep place. We love to reflect and we need to withdraw. We need rhythm to sustain us, and often find that it is only in order and balance that we can survive in the chaotic socially tidal world we inhabit. We fear the exhaustion that ensues when there is no respite from others, and the flattening experience of being swept along by an extrovert friend or community who unwittingly and uninvited will trample freely on holy ground. We are wary of the shallowness and apparent insincerity of the world we are so often invited to inhabit. We often struggle with guilt that we have no more to give, but long for the space to think and to be still.
What do we mean?

• What is an introvert?
• What is a charismatic

• Note “Charis” (χάρις) – Grace, favour, kindness
A ‘charismatic’ is a herald of the Kingdom...

• Wearing the regalia of the Kingdom
• Distinctive speech and outlook
• Doing the works of the King
• Clear where they belong
• Carrying the authority of the King
What, then, do I mean by a charismatic? I mean someone who walks in the fullness of the Spirit of God; someone who seeks to do the work that Jesus commissioned in the power of the Spirit and to the glory of the Father. I mean a Christian who is committed to the Kingdom of God in all its fullness; someone who has repented and believed the Good News, who longs for the coming of the King and rejoices over every small sign of that coming and glorious presence. I mean a Christian in all the full wonder of that name.
Some myths: an introvert is not necessarily...

- Shy
- Antisocial
- Arrogant
- Inarticulate
- Self-sufficient
Some myths: an charismatic doesn’t have to be...

- Loud
- Forceful
- Extrovert
- American!
Why does this matter?

• we bring familiarity with, and comfort, in the inner world
• we offer the practice of reflection
• we offer the dignity of space
• we offer the gifts of listening and noticing
• we offer a hunger for the heart of God
• we offer the search for wisdom
Perhaps most importantly for me, we have within us a yearning for wisdom. I think this is the gift I hunger for more than any other, and I have done since I was a boy. It seems inexplicable to me that this is not the central desire of every Christian. Why is this not the gift that we preach on and practice most of all gifts? We recognise it and revere it in a few, but mostly we ignore it, favouring instead the passing delights of the new and the innovative.

Wisdom is that deep and applied knowledge of the ways of God. It is the holding of the Creator’s hand and understanding the beating of the heart of creation. It is the mind of Christ and the living application of truth. Wisdom is speaking with the accent of the Father and seeing from the perspective of a child hoisted on His shoulders. Wisdom understands and probes understanding. Wisdom makes knowledge look like an impatient upstart and delights in the nature of being.

There is an important point to be made here, though, and that is that wisdom in the Bible is never, as far as I can see, a personal gift, in the sense that it is given for one person alone. It is a gift given through one or more people for a community.
When Solomon asks for it in 2 Chronicles 1, this is what he asks: “Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?” And God replies, “… since you [have asked] for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king…”

Wisdom illustrates perfectly that introversion is a strand within character, not permission to withdraw from community. We belong with the family and our distinctives are just as vital to it as the gifts brought by any other, as too are the challenges that are brought by the family to each of us, whatever our personality may be.

Wisdom is precious, and when faith can find security out of the limelight it can be nurtured. However, wisdom doesn’t flourish in the glare of immediacy. It, even she, is precious and yet illusive. Developing wisdom takes time and desire, yearning and discipline. It is to be cherished where it is found.
So how does charismatic introvert prayer appear?

• It springs from a deep & real relationship
• It is attentive
• It is reliant on the Spirit of God
• It is spacious
Some prayer focii

- Leaders
- Businesses
- Homes, families, the lost and the lonely
- Hospitals, police, social services, etc
- Young people, schools...
- Churches