

Communicating with God

for a starter

Think of some times when you and another person have really communicated, whether about something trivial or meaningful...

- What does it mean to communicate and how does it happen?
- What ideally does communication do for the people involved?
- What are some of the problems a person might anticipate in communicating with God?

into it

Read Psalm 19. It is a Hebrew poem celebrating God's communication with us through nature and through scripture. What do you notice about these two different avenues of communication? What outcomes is God looking for as he communicates with us?

For communication to happen with someone, you need a meeting place or medium which is common to you both (e.g. a phone connecting your voices, texting or email carrying words between you, or a café where you meet face to face)

What are some of the possible 'meeting places or mediums' we can use to connect with God?

What works for you? We are all different! Some people like doing stuff with God by themselves while some like to include others. Some are arty and philosophical while others are practical and analytical. Such variety is good!

Note down the ways that have been particularly helpful for you in connecting with God. These may really help others out. (See also "give this a go!" for something that may help you)

Read Mat 6:1-15. What does Jesus teach us about communicating with God?

Imagine you found an Internet website for God. So you make a list of everything you ever wanted to happen and sent the file to the God website. Would this constitute communication with God? Why or why not?

Some tough questions...

Sometimes misunderstanding takes place in human communication. What steps do you think we can take to make sure we have correctly understood what God has said to us?

Are there occasions when God may be silent?

has God been here?

What has this experience been like today as we've done this? It'd be great to share anything that has been said or read today that has impacted and/or challenged you – or even if you haven't been able to get into it, that'd be good to say too. This is a great chance to get real with each other

so what?

does anything change for me as a result of going through this stuff? To end off, spend a couple of minutes by yourself clarifying and summarising what you have learned and what you're going to do about it.

Give this a go!

All relationships take time to develop. Time to talk and listen. But also time to understand the other, to experience life together. Serious conversations also require some privacy. You know what it's like trying to have a D&M with someone who is totally preoccupied with something else or is rushing off to do little jobs every few minutes.

With friends we usually make some plans to have coffee or do lunch, carving some time out of our life ahead of time because of the importance of the other person to us.

What about God? Why not plan to 'catch up' with God as part of a daily routine – either by yourself or with others? Here's one way you could do it...

Read a passage from the bible and talk to God about these kinds of questions:

- What does this say about **God's** character, purposes and relationship with people?
- What does this say about my **inner life** – my character, heart, attitudes, my identity and purpose?
- What does this say about my **relationships with other people**, my friends, family, 'neighbours'?
- What does this say about my **outer world** – my work, my studies, health, money, possessions? What does it say about the world I live in – the govt, environment, justice, arts...?

Where you sense some connection, talk to God more about your specific situation and re-read the important sections, perhaps even taking notes of any new insights or perspective. These might come from:

- Warnings...on things to avoid
- Promises...to claim
- Examples...to reflect on
- Commands...to follow
- Good thoughts...to stick in your memory