

## Tools that help us to be Caring People

There are several things we can use to help us examine ourselves in order to be more enabled to allow God to touch and center us thus enabling us to do better in our care for others. First, there are a few simple things we can use on a daily basis.

1. The pointing finger. Every time we point our finger we state our self-importance, just like the publican. Remember when you point a finger at someone else, you have three more pointing back at you.
2. Examine your prayer life in terms of praying hands, palms together, fingers straight. Thumb: pray for those closest to you. Pointer: Pray for those who show you the way. Middle: pray for those in leadership or those with roles of supervision. Ring: pray for those who are weak. Pinky: pray for the smallest and furthest from you as well as yourself.
3. Use the prayer of St. Francis (#481 in the United Methodist Hymnal)
4. Instead of only memorizing John 3:16, put John 3:17 with it realizing that condemnation of others or self was never God's purpose.

Additionally:

Examine Peter's life in terms of your own. Peter was always vacillating between self and God. Peter even denied Christ three times to protect himself. Then he meets up with Jesus after the resurrection. Does Jesus say I told you so? No. Does Jesus point out what Peter did wrong? No. Does Jesus express anger and walk away because Peter did not carry out his disciple role just right? No. Does Jesus tell him that periods of denial do not or cannot happen for those who follow him? No. Does Jesus demand an apology before ever associating with Peter again? No. Does Jesus nurture and harbor the pain and hurt he must have felt when one of his closest friends denied him? No.

What does Jesus do? He asks, "Peter, do you love me?" Peter, do you love yourself or me? Jesus asks this three times, patiently reorienting Peter from self to God. Three times Peter says, "Yes." Jesus responds, "Then, feed my sheep." Care for others, be an answer to somebody's prayer! (John 21: 15 – 17)

To care for others means not giving up on them or pushing them, their thoughts, their ideas, their concerns to the side. To care for others involves being God-Centered and not self-centered.