Sharing a devotional

A short guide for anyone asked to share one.

What it is

A devotional is a short reflection built around a passage of Scripture. Five to ten minutes. One passage, one idea, and what it might mean for us this week.

What it isn't

It isn't a sermon. You are not expected to explain the passage verse by verse, cover three points, or resolve anything difficult. A sermon teaches a text to a gathered church. A devotional invites a group to sit with one idea for a few minutes.

Doing less is not a lesser version of the job. It is the job.

The shape

1. **Read the passage aloud.** Twice if it is short. Let people actually hear it.
2. **Say what struck you.** First person is fine, and usually better. "What I noticed was…"
3. **Land on one thing** it might mean for us this week.
4. **Pray**, or invite someone else to.

That is the whole structure. If you have those four, you have a devotional.

Preparing it

Pick the passage first, not the illustration. If you start with a great story and go looking for a verse to attach to it, everyone can tell.

Ask yourself: what is the one thing? If you cannot say it in a sentence, you are not ready to share it yet. Keep sitting with the passage until the sentence arrives.

Write your last line first. Knowing where you are landing makes the rest much easier, and it stops you trailing off.

Say it out loud and time it. Everything runs longer aloud than it reads on the page.

Common traps

- **Three ideas instead of one.** The most common way a devotional goes wrong. Pick the best one and let the others go.
- **Opening with an apology.** "I'm not really a speaker, sorry, I only got this on Tuesday." It is kindly meant, but it asks the room to look after you. Just start.
- **Making it about the story.** A good illustration serves the passage. If people remember the story and not the verse, it was too good.
- **Finishing without landing.** Say the one thing plainly before you pray. Do not assume people inferred it.

One last thing

You were asked because of who you are and what you have walked through, not because anyone thinks you are a Bible scholar. Something God has been teaching you lately, said honestly in five minutes, will do more good in the room than something polished that you borrowed.

If you get stuck, ask. That is not a failure, it is how this works.

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