

Title: Observation of practicing prayer: Immanuel Journaling in a Thai Seminary Community

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the practice of Immanuel Journaling (IM) prayer of a Thai seminary community. Thirteen participants from the Thai Seminary Center participated in Immanuel Journaling (IM) prayer for 6 weeks. The purpose of this research is to observe the experience of using Immanuel Journaling in the Thai context, and to compare spiritual experiences and other aspects of life before and after using Immanuel Journaling. The data was collected through the writing journals and in-depth interviews in Thai, translated into English and put into groups. The research found three results which are: first, the three dimensions impact on the participation in the IM (Age, personal style, and ministry). It is found that the participants expressed of the presence of God through their writing journals in the differences kinds of ages, personal styles and ministries. The group of ages 30-35 expressed the relationship with God as the king and the most high, whereas the group of ages 20-30 expressed the relationship with God as friends. The writing journals were also different from the individual lifestyles such as the married participants concerned about their family,

spouse and children, whereas the single participants concerned about their relationship with friends. In addition, the writing journals showed the variety of concerning in the ministries. The participant who had worked for the church tended to write for the guidance, wisdom in order to lead the church, whereas the apprentices wrote about wisdom, love of God for strength, encouragement to serve God. Second, the observation on the writing journal of the participants in each step of IM found that, the participants express the thought and the feeling of God's responses which is God can helps them and supports them in both physical and spiritual strength.

Third, the comparison between before and after using IM found that after using IM, the participants could better control their unwanted behaviors such as angry, unstable moods, especially they would like to increase in the spiritual growth in the relationship with God, and others.

In addition, the observation of the steps of Immanuel Journaling found that most of the participants were not familiar with the combination with meditation to God and writing at the same time. However, after a week of practicing Immanuel Journaling, the participants were more enjoyable using IM. The recommendation of using IM is for individual devotion in order to have senses of awareness of God's presence, to have close relationship with God, to help the personal spiritual growth, and to have understanding God's love to others.