



THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS CORPORATE LITURGIES PROJECT

How does a community of faith stay anchored together to the reality of God's transforming love during a time of global pandemic? This question has been nagging at me since COVID-19 threw a hand grenade in our proverbial living room back in March. Thankfully, we are not the first generation to be asking this question. Over the last 2,000 years, the church has learned to flourish despite wars, plagues, famines, and persecution.

One of the secrets to the church's success during the darkest of times has been the development of corporate rhythms that help people practice the presence of God through prayerful meditation on Scripture. In fact, two reform movements that completely reshaped Western civilization started at least partially as a result of communities organized around a simple daily habit of silence, Scripture, self-examination, and prayer (The Rule of St. Benedict in the 6th century and Thomas Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer in the 16th century).

During this season when so much of our embodied corporate life together has been scattered and shuttered, we want to invite our community to stay spiritually and emotionally unified through regular rhythms and commitments that enable us to grow, learn, and change together. We are calling these formative practices "Corporate Liturgies."

This fall we will be teaching through the book of Philipians and exploring God's vision for becoming a joyful, united, wholehearted community of faith. In conjunction with this series, we have created this weekly guide to help us slow down to be with Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to apply the truths of this letter to our lives. Our hope is that engaging the presence of God together will create a shared vision, language, and desires that unite our hearts & souls despite our physical distance.

Our suggestion is that you set aside a regular time either personally or as a group (MC, discipleship, families, roommates) to work through this guide. Consider starting with 10-15 minutes in the morning, at lunch, or in the evening before bed (or multiple times if possible). Don't get discouraged if you get distracted or miss a few days - that's completely normal! Remember the goal isn't to get it perfect, but to open ourselves to God's loving presence and invite him to transform us.

Peace,
Pastor Brandon

HOW DO I USE THIS GUIDE?

Our daily liturgy is centered around four movements of practicing God's presence: Silence, Scripture, Self-Examination, and Supplication.¹

Silence

- Purpose: Silent prayer is described as simply "being with God." This practice moves our hearts from a posture of transaction to a posture of relationship.
- Example: Before beginning, take a deep breath. Center your thoughts by praying a short phrase like, "Here I am," "Come Holy Spirit," or simply "Jesus."

Scripture

- Purpose: Prayerfully reading Scripture is an important discipline for believers. This act renews our minds, and immerses us in God's life and action. Each week we will read slowly and meditatively through one passage of Scripture.
- Example: Move slowly. Ask the Lord to reveal what He has for you. As you read, write down or highlight parts that stand out to you. What does this text teach you about God, others, and yourself? How do you need to respond?

Self-Examination

- Purpose: During Self-Examination, we are inviting God to reveal to us our true state (Psalm 139). Without the Holy Spirit, we are unable to clearly see where we may need conviction, wisdom, and healing. This movement requires us to look within, and respond with open hands.
- Example: Observe how God is present to you in Scripture. What stood out to you? What impacted you? Examine what you are thinking, feeling, desiring, or avoiding in response to the passage.

Supplication

- Purpose: Supplication invites us to acknowledge our limitations, and God's ability to provide. This movement increases our dependence on God. We have provided for you specific prayers of supplication to guide your time.

¹ This prayer structure is outlined by Pastor Rich Villodas in his prayer guide "Midday Prayers for Every Day." Available at www.richvillodas.com.

Week 4: Philippians 2:1-11

October 5-11

1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Monday, October 5

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - How does Christ's example offer us encouragement?
- Self-Examination
 - Observe how God is present to you in Scripture today. Examine what you are thinking, feeling, desiring, or avoiding in response to this passage.
- Supplication
 - Pray through Ephesians 5:1-2. Acknowledge your dependence on God to become an imitator of Christ. Ask for His help in becoming like Jesus.

Tuesday, October 6

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - Where has the Holy Spirit been convicting you of your pride and "selfish ambition?"
- Self-Examination
 - Observe how God is present to you in Scripture today. Examine what you are thinking, feeling, desiring, or avoiding in response to this passage.
- Supplication
 - Ask God to grow your humility. Acknowledge that you are dependent on Him for any change. Pray for opportunities to consider others more significant than yourself.

Wednesday, October 7

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - As we look at Christ's example, we see that He "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." What far lesser things in life do you find yourself clinging tightly too?
- Self-Examination
 - Observe how God is present to you in Scripture today. Examine what you are thinking, feeling, desiring, or avoiding in response to this passage.
- Supplication
 - Ask God to open your hands. Acknowledge that you need His help to maintain a posture of trust and surrender.

Thursday, October 8

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - Meditate on Christ's experience of "being found in human form" "the form of a servant." What words come to mind? What qualities does He exhibit?
- Self-Examination
 - Observe how God is present to you in Scripture today. Examine what you are thinking, feeling, desiring, or avoiding in response to this passage.
- Supplication
 - Taking the words you drew from Christ's experience coming to earth, offer them to God as prayer - asking Him to increase those same qualities in your own life.

Friday, October 9

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - Reflect on verses 9-11. How does Christ's supremacy over all things impact you today?
- Self-Examination
 - Observe how God is present to you in Scripture today. Examine what you are thinking, feeling, desiring, or avoiding in response to this passage.
- Supplication
 - Ask the Lord to help you live in the truth of Christ's ultimate rule.