



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 5: Philippians 2:12-30

October 12-18

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. 17 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. 20 For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. 23 I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, 24 and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

25 I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, 26 for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. 29 So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, 30 for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

Monday, October 12

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - What does it mean to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling?” Consider your posture as sinner, standing before a holy and perfect God.
- 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 “Lord Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.”

Tuesday, October 13

- Silence

- Scripture Meditation
 - Meditate on what it means to “shine as (a light) in the world.” What does this look like at work? Among your family? Amidst your friends?
- 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 for strength to not conform to the ways of the world. Ask Him to renew your mind, starting with today (Romans 12:2).

Wednesday, October 14

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - What is the “word of life?” How can you hold fast to it?
- 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 keep His gospel, our eternal perspective, at the forefront of your mind today.

Thursday, October 15

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - What is Paul referencing when he talks about his “run(ning)” and “labor(ing)?” Why were these not in vain?
- 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
 - Read Isaiah 40:31. Ask the Lord to renew your strength to run this race of life well.

Friday, October 16

- Silence
- Scripture Meditation
 - Paul affirms Timothy’s character and tells the Philippians to honor Epaphroditus. Why does Paul admire these men? What about your life would cause those around you to conclude your concern for Jesus and others was genuine?
- 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 yourself, “What do I need grace for today?” Once you have identified it, ask God to provide that for you today.