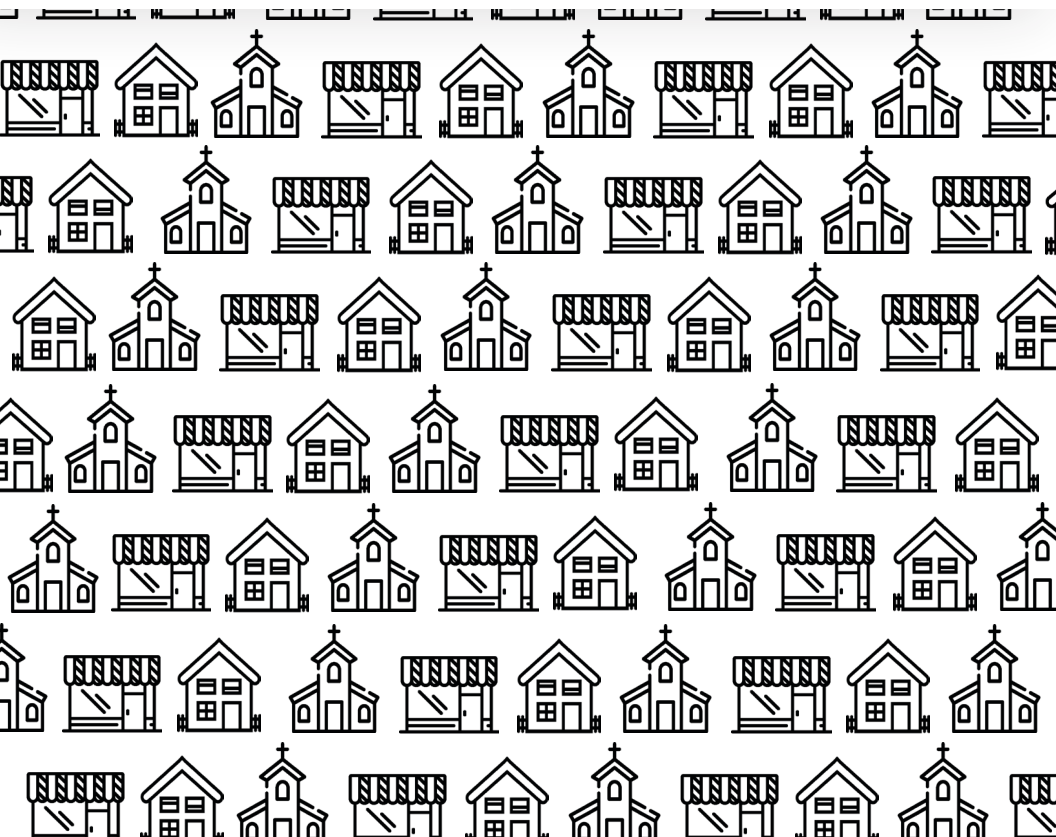


SENT

living on mission in the church, at home and everywhere



This devotional guide is adapted from the following books. We highly recommend reading them in their entirety. We believe they will be encouraging and helpful in your personal ministries.

Faithful Presence by David E. Fitch
Subterranean by Dan White, Jr.
Church as Movement by Dan White, Jr.

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HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus

1 Corinthians 1:4

Introduction

You wake up, get out of bed and start your morning routine. You make your coffee and check your email. You help the kids get ready for school. You go for a morning run.

You start your day. You go to school or to work. You clean up around the house. You watch the kids.

You leave to go home. You go to the store. You meet up with friends for dinner or drinks.

You return home. You check your phone. You set the alarm. You talk with your family or roommates.

You work more. You work less. You stay home. You go on vacation.

Almost every aspect of your day-to-day life is a moment where you can have an impact on the world for the glory of God. We have so many opportunities in our homes, in our church and in our world to share the gospel and the hope of Jesus Christ.



We have been given the ministry of reconciliation. We are called to live out this ministry fully, in every aspect of our lives.

These devotionals have been written to illustrate the need to grow in disciplines that shape us to live missionally. Whether you stay home, go on vacation or anything in between, we pray this guide encourages you to share the hope of Jesus with anyone you encounter. May the kingdom of God come in our lives as it is in heaven.

Activity

This call to embody the ministry of Jesus Christ in everything we do can be overwhelming. We hope to provide you with some practical challenges, ways to put these ideas into practice.

At The Park Community Church, it is our strongest belief that, as Christ's ransomed church, we do not strive for the approval of God. Instead, we do good works out of the abundance of gratitude we have for the hope we have in Christ Jesus.

There are seven weeks of activities suggesting ways that you can live on mission in everyday life in every social circle and sphere of influence you might have.

These challenges are not meant to burden you, but to inspire you to live a life of good works inspired by the grace and kindness of the Lord. We hope you discuss these challenges with your families, your friends and your missional communities and that you are a light in this world.

Online Companion Piece

We will also be providing additional resources, including podcast recordings and videos, through our church website. We will be sharing personal testimonies about how these disciplines are useful for the building up of the Kingdom. You can find these online resources at:

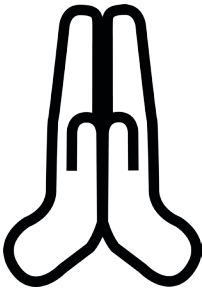
www.theparksa.org/summer2017devotional

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. For if we care beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21



THE DISCIPLINE OF KINGDOM PRAYER

Most of us believe that church is important. We try very hard to make it to church every week. We make friends at church. We might even invite people we know to try out our church.

But what if we were called to pray for something different?

In Matthew 6, Jesus instructs his disciples how to pray. He says, *'Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..."'*

We often want to bring people into the church; we want to get them into the building and on our side. That's not wrong. There is much good that can be done by surrounding yourself with a community of believer and by participating in Sunday morning gatherings with a church family.

The kingdom prayer casts a larger net. Praying for the kingdom of God to come in our world as it is in heaven means that we pray for the renewal of all things, not just our church things. It means that we pray that God will pursue his glory in our world. One way he chooses to do so is through us.

Praying for God to use us to advance the kingdom is a declaration of obedience to follow God wherever he might ask us to go. It requires sacrifice and hard work. It demands intentionality of us. When we ask for the kingdom of God to come in our world, we ask for a reality where we worship God in all things. As David Fitch writes in *Faithful Presence*, we are "pledging to cooperate with God."

When we pray for the kingdom to come, we are also praying against anything that is not godly. We pray against sin and brokenness, injustice and violence. We grieve the fallen state of our world and invite God's goodness to illuminate the shadows of sin and death until the world radiates to a new and living hope once more.

Finally, when we pray for the kingdom to come, we pray for Christ's presence. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. He reigns and rules over his kingdom forever. In our world, he is present through us, his church and his body. We pray that we are present in this world as we pledge our cooperation with God to bring about the renewal of all things.

Do you pray for the kingdom to come in your life, church, neighborhood and world? How do you see God at work in these spheres and how can you join him in those works?

THE DISCIPLINE OF KINGDOM PRAYER

Pray then like this:

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

Matthew 6:9-13



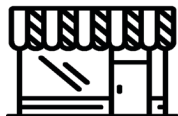
AT HOME:

Whether you're a parent, child, roommate or sole occupant, pray that your home becomes a place where God is glorified and where his kingdom advances. Ask God to reveal the ways in which you can better serve him in your home.



AT CHURCH:

Pray that our church becomes a place that advances the kingdom in our outreach, in our Sunday morning gatherings, in our missional communities and through our missional partners. Ask God to show you how you can better serve the kingdom through our church.



IN THE WORLD:

Think about the places you frequent. This could be your work, class, your favorite restaurants and coffee shops, the gym, the store, your kid's school. Pray that God would start a work of kingdom advancement there. Ask him how you can join him in the renewal of all things in these places where he's placed you.

LECTIO DIVINA

Dwell in Matthew 6:5-15 this week. Read through this passage slowly once and spend a few minutes silently reflecting on it. Then read the passage slowly again.

Write a word or phrase that stand out to you. Read the passage slowly once more.

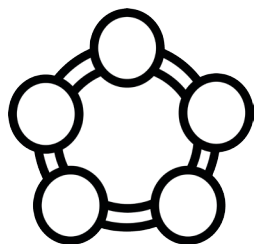
Expand on your thought in a few sentences. Finally, read through the passage slowly again and pray that God continues to stir this thought into action, that you might live out his Word in our world. Journal that prayer below and revisit it throughout your week.

Matthew 6:5-15

Word or phrase:

Expanded thought:

Prayer:



THE DISCIPLINE OF THE BEST GIFTING

Have you ever listened to someone speak enthusiastically about a passion or an obsession they hold dear and been entirely baffled by their excitement? How, you wonder, could anyone be excited about spreadsheets? Or you think, why would anyone ever get up on a stage and talk to a room of strangers?

The church is an interesting environment. It is, as Paul would say, a body made up of people. It's not an individual experience; it requires people working interdependently for the growth of the church. Often, these people have different giftings.

In the book of Ephesians, Paul charges the church of Ephesus to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” to which they had been called. Think about that. Paul charges an entire church to live together in ways that reflected the grace that they had been

given through Christ, a grace they were also called to give. A group of people, all different and with different giftings, are exhorted to work together to do God's good works. Imagine working together in ministry and never getting to do what God has designed you to do. You risk what we call burnout.

The APEST gifts, or the Fivefold gifts, is detailed in Ephesians 4:11. Paul writes that God has called his church to be full of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers.

According to Alan Hirsch, apostles extend the gospel as those who are sent. They are future-oriented; they are planners. Prophets know God's will and bring correction and challenge, insisting obedience and faithfulness over all. Evangelists share the gospel with people, to masses or to individuals. They cannot help but share the story of God with anyone who will listen. Shepherds are caregivers who nurture and protect God's people. They create loving and spiritually mature networks of relationships to develop disciples. (Hirsch). Teachers are communicators of the truth of God. they disseminate wisdom to help others better understand the word and the will of God.

...[T]he church is called to use its gifts and abilities to be a diverse and healthy body that grows toward spiritual maturation in faith.

The call for the church in Ephesians is not to simply live into their gifting. Paul isn't writing to urge the members to self-actualize, to be their best selves. He urges the church to corporately work on this together. They have been given these gifts to, as Paul writes, "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all again to the unity of faith..." That is, to say, the church is called to use its gifts and abilities to be a diverse and healthy body that grows toward spiritual maturation in faith. Spiritual maturity in faith is a life that looks like the life of Jesus. It is selfless, sacrificial and holy.

Do you know your spiritual gifts? Do you know the gifts of your family members, friends, roommates and missional community? How can you export the church to pursue holiness and godliness through their spiritual gifts?

THE DISCIPLINE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTING

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...

Ephesians 4:11-12



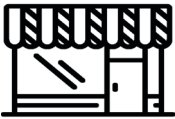
AT HOME:

Take the Fivefold Spiritual Gifting online test. Discuss your giftings and your weaknesses with your family or your roommates. How can you use your gifts to help them attain maturity? How can they use their giftings to cover your weaknesses?



AT CHURCH:

Talk with your missional community or pastors about your gifting. Ask them how you can use your gifts to better serve the church. Ask your missional community to help you in your weaknesses and offer to do the same for them.



IN THE WORLD:

Think about your coworkers or the people you encounter on a regular basis. Do you see any of these giftings in them? Encourage them in their strengths and gifts, even if they don't believe in Christ. Pray how you can use your gifts to advance the kingdom of God in these places.

Dwell in Ephesians 4:1-16 this week. Read through this passage slowly once and spend a few minutes silently reflecting on it. Then read the passage slowly again. Write a word or phrase that stand out to you. Read the passage

slowly once more. Expand on your thought in a few sentences. Finally, read through the passage slowly again and pray that God continues to stir this thought into action, that you might live out his Word in our world. Journal that prayer below and revisit it throughout your week.

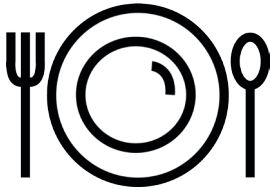
LECTIO DIVINA

Ephesians 4:1-16

Word or phrase:

Expanded thought:

Prayer:



THE DISCIPLINE OF THE TABLE

Jesus is walking through Jericho when he looked up to see a man, Zacchaeus, in a tree. Zacchaeus, short of stature, wants to see Jesus so naturally he finds his way up a tree. Jesus says to him, *"Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."*

Zacchaeus and Jesus had most likely never met, yet here is Jesus, the Savior of the world, inviting himself over to Zacchaeus' house. Zacchaeus gladly obliges and is given salvation.

The discipline of the table, what we might think of as intentional hospitality, is a potent means of ministry. Jesus thought so. He valued the table enough that he would actually invite himself into the houses of people moments after meeting them for the first time. Jesus' ministry happened at the table.

In Luke 10, Jesus sends out 72 other disciples and he instructs them to go into houses and eat with people. They are then told to heal the sick and finally share the gospel. The table is the first step in ministry. It is the groundwork for getting to know people.

In Luke 22, Jesus has gathered his disciples for Passover when he hands the bread and wine. It is written, *'And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."* And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, *"This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, *"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."* Jesus tells his disciples that he is about to be the sacrifice and atonement for their sins. Salvation happens at the table.

Amazing things happen when we extend the invitation to the table and when we receive invitations to the tables of others. We learn about the work of God in our lives and in the lives of others.

We realize we have commonalities with people in different life stages or from different backgrounds than us, sometimes more than we had once thought. The opportunities for ministry and community present themselves through God's grace. These beautiful moments only happen when we prepare the food, set the table and take the time to sit with others. We are called to invite people to the table of Jesus. That starts with simple meals.

Jesus' ministry happened at the table.

Dan White, Jr., the author of the book *Subterranean*, says the end goal of our relationships is to share in the gospel, but too often we want to jump to the evangelism step. In order for us to earn the right to call out sin in others, we have to get to know them first. The best way for people to see Christ's presence in their lives is to give them your presence. The best way to invite them to the table of Jesus Christ is to invite them to your table.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE TABLE

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And Awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ...And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and

having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:41-44,46-47



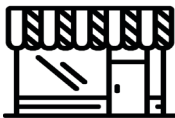
AT HOME:

Make dinner at home with your family or your roommates this week. Unplug. Leave your phones in another room and sit intentionally with each other. Ask them about their week and specifically encourage them. Wake up early one morning and make breakfast together and read Scripture and pray together before you start your days.



AT CHURCH:

Invite someone from church over for dinner this week, specifically someone in another life stage than you. Ask for their wisdom or offer yours. Write down ways that you can continue to pray for them. Make plans to have a meal with them again in the future.



IN THE WORLD:

Invite a coworker or a neighbor over. Before they come over, pray that God would start to form a relationship through which the gospel can eventually be shared. During your meal, ask tons of questions and really listen. Before you evangelize them, get to know them deeply.

LECTIO DIVINA

Dwell in Acts 2:42-47 this week. Read through this passage slowly once and spend a few minutes silently reflecting on it. Then read the passage slowly again.

Write a word or phrase that stand out to you. Read the passage

slowly once more. Expand on your thought in a few sentences. Finally, read through the passage slowly again and pray that God continues to stir this thought into action, that you might live out his Word in our world. Journal that prayer below and revisit it throughout your week.

Acts 2:42-47

Word or phrase:

Expanded thought:

Prayer:



THE DISCIPLINE OF BEING WITH CHILDREN

Often when we think of discipleship and evangelism, we think of ministering to other adults. We imagine our coworkers and neighbors. We think of people outside of our church.

We also tend to think of children's ministries as a separate section of the church. We might think dropping our kids off in children's ministry is also secretly our break from them for an hour on Sunday morning. We think of volunteering with the kids as a calling God gives to some but not all. We place the call to minister to children in our church on a few volunteers and on parents. We place the call to care for and to instruct children on teachers and educators. We, as the church, often forget that we are called to make disciples of all people, including children.

The kids in our lives are learning. They are getting to know the world around them, but they are also desperately wanting to be known. Babies cry when they are alone and afraid because they don't know their environment. Toddlers who cannot yet vocalize their thoughts get frustrated, feeling unheard and unknown. Teenagers act out in rebellion when they feel misunderstood.

The church might not be getting to know, really knowing, our children. Maybe that's why multiple studies show that teenagers leave their faith when they go to college.

Somewhere along the way, we've decided that we grow up and grow out of being with children.

Jesus, in Matthew 18, is approached by his disciples, who ask him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Instead of pointing to one of them, Jesus summons a child. He says, *"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"* (v. 3-4). Jesus tells full-grown adults to be more childlike. Jesus, the Son of God, loves children. He calls us to do the same.

Somewhere along the way, we've decided that we grow up and grow out of being with children. We've decided that we graduate. We get to sit at the spiritual big kid's table. Jesus calls us to do the opposite. Children can be vulnerable and want to be known. Jesus says sit with them. Learn from them. We are, after all, God's children.

In the end of days, we will sit at the feet of our perfect Father and learn from him. Until then, let's learn how to do that by emulating the Father to the children in our lives, in our homes, in our church, in our world. God loves his children; we are called to do the same.

THE DISCIPLINE OF BEING WITH CHILDREN

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Mark 10:13-16



AT HOME:

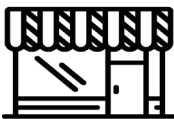
Parents, take time this week to pray with your kids and read Scripture together. Ask them how you can be praying for them and listen to them. Get to know their dreams, their joys, their worries and stresses. If your children are younger, read to them from a Storytime Bible. Start to immerse them in the Word and the worship of God.



AT CHURCH:

Offer to babysit for someone at church or coordinate a playdate with other families from church. Pray intentionally for these families and for ways that you can be an encouragement and a voice of Truth to these children and parents.

Prayerfully consider volunteering in Family Ministries once a month on Sunday mornings.



IN THE WORLD:

Volunteer your time at your local school or for Big Brothers & Big Sisters. Our world desperately needs good mentors for children. Pray for the schools in your neighborhood, that kids would grow to know the Lord.

LECTIO DIVINA

Dwell in Mark 10:13-16 and Matthew 18:1-6 this week. Read through this passage slowly once and spend a few minutes silently reflecting on it. Then read the passage slowly again. Write a word or phrase that stand out to you.

Read the passage slowly once more. Expand on your thought in a few sentences. Finally, read through the passage slowly again and pray that God continues to stir this thought into action, that you might live out his Word in our world. Journal that prayer below and revisit it throughout your week.

Mark 10:13-16

Word or phrase:

Expanded thought:

Prayer:

Matthew 18:1-6

Word or phrase:

Expanded thought:

Prayer:



THE DISCIPLINE OF BEING WITH THE LEAST OF THESE

Have you ever gone on a mission trip or a service project and done something charitable only to leave and realize that you didn't get to know the people you served at all? Do you ever drive in a rough neighborhood of town and check to make sure your car doors are locked instead of beholding the people around you? Sure, you have. Most of us have. We know we are supposed to be kind and charitable to others, but we naturally reject people who are different from us. Think about it. How many friend do you have in vastly different social and economic situations?

More often than not, when we have plenty and when life is good, we surround ourselves with people in the same boat. Our friends share our same zeal for life, our same privelege, our same nationality, our same education, our same opportunities. We rarely seek the company of the afflicted, the hurting, the "other."

In John 4, Jesus is on his way to Galilee from Judea. He is passing through Samaria from Judea, but a "good Jew" would never associate with a Samaritan. They would never travel through the land of the Samaritans. They would opt to bypass Samaria by taking a longer route. However, Jesus has to pass through Samaria (v.4). Jesus had a divine requirement to travel through the land of the "other."

While he's traveling through Samaria, Jesus is tired and thirsty, so he stops at a well. It just so happens that a woman is also at the well.

Jesus turns to the woman and says, "Give me a drink." The woman is incredulous. She

asks, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" Instead of reinforcing this lowly social position she has learned, Jesus instead offers her living water from the spring of water welling up to eternal life (v. 14). She begs, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to drink water." She is desperate for salvation from her circumstances. Jesus doesn't only offer her salvation from her circumstances; he offers salvation for her soul. She goes back into town and shares the story of Christ. Many Samaritans came to believe in Christ because of her testimony.

Jesus had a divine requirement to travel through the land of the "other."

Jesus knew the importance of being with the least of these. He built his kingdom around them. He extends his kingdom through them. In fact, we were once the least of these, as Ephesians 2:2 says. We lived among them. Yet God had to pass by us. He had a divine requirement to see us and to offer us salvation.

The kingdom prayer and the ministry of reconciliation gives us a divine requirement to meet with the least of these: the afflicted, the hurt, the broken, the downtrodden, the orphan, the widow, the outsider. It requires us to be present with them and to know them. Once we know them, it requires us to offer a drink from the spring of water welling up to eternal life, which is Christ Jesus. We introduce them to Jesus who offers living water, that they may not thirst any longer.

THE DISCIPLINE OF BEING WITH THE LEAST OF THESE

Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

Matthew 25:37-40



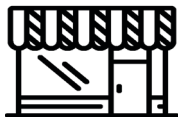
AT HOME:

Instead of viewing your home as your castle which you seek to protect, what are some ways you might consider opening your home to the least of these? Maybe you bring people into your home who you know suffer from loneliness or depression. Maybe you and your family serve the homeless together. Discuss with your family ways that you can reach out to the afflicted and downtrodden.



AT CHURCH:

Are there people at church you know are struggling financially, socially or emotionally? How are you being the church to them? Make divine appointments to dwell with them this week.



IN THE WORLD:

Many of our missional partners serve "the least of these" in our city. Consider volunteering with SnackPak, Any Woman Can, Agora Ministries, Stillwater Camps. Talk to any pastor or staff member for more information on these partners.

LECTIO DIVINA

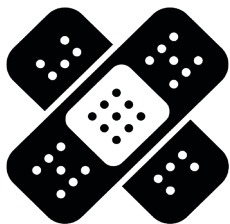
Dwell in Matthew 25:31-46 this week. Read through this passage slowly once and spend a few minutes silently reflecting on it. Then read the passage slowly again. Write a word or phrase that stand out to you. Read the passage slowly once more. Expand on your thought in a few sentences. Finally, read through the passage slowly again and pray that God continues to stir this thought into action, that you might live out his Word in our world. Journal that prayer below and revisit it throughout your week.

Matthew 25:31-46

Word or phrase:

Expanded thought:

Prayer:



THE DISCIPLINE OF RECON- CILIATION

In 2015, Chapman University studied the most common fears of the average American sorted into categories. While catastrophes and natural disasters dominated the list, the category of day-to-day life fears included many relational stresses.

People name rejection, being dismissed by others, ridicule and expressing their opinions as some of their deepest fears. We live in such fear of others' opinions of us that we allow ourselves to live in deep anxiety.

The life of the church is interdependent. That means we have to live with each other, spend time with one another and minister alongside each other. As with any group of people who are surrounded by

each other, it's only a matter of time until there is relational friction. As people, we are bound to have disagreements. As sinners, we are bound to offend others with our words and actions. Conflict is unavoidable.

We can often feel the urge to shrink away from conflict in fear. We can shy away from but God has a different plan for his church.

We are hardwired to want to win, to self-preserve. We want to be the good guy, the hero. What God calls us to, however, is the ministry of reconciliation, which is the good news that God has sent his Son to save us from our sin, even while we were still

My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back.

James 5:19

sinners. Since we have been reconciled to God, we no longer have to be anything or do anything extraordinary in our own might. We don't have to be the hero or the good guy; that role was filled perfectly by Jesus. We don't have to be offended when there is conflict. Rather we look at it as a way to be like Jesus, reconciling each other to God.

It's easy to say, easy to want, but difficult to execute. When we are at fault, we want to defend ourselves. When we are wronged, we want our idea of justice. What God wants for us, though, is to live interdependently, working together for His glory. He wants us to repent of wrongdoing and to call out sin when we see it. As it is written in James 5:19, "*My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back.*"

Hopefully, this more cosmic and more eternal mindset makes difficult conversations easier. It also should move us to look around at our world and see all the conflicts and injustices around us and urge others into reconciliation. We are called to be Christlike, sacrificing our comfort for the reconciliation of others. This is not an overnight mission. It takes us being present in our neighborhoods, workplaces, church and homes.

How are you engaging in the ministry of reconciliation in your spiritual life, in your relationships and in our world?

THE DISCIPLINE OF RECONCILIATION

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed

ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

Ephesians 2:14-16



AT HOME:

Is there hurt and hostility in your home that needs to be met with peace? Do you often find yourself in unhealthy conflict in your home instead of being a peace maker? Pray this week that your home can be united, one body. Ask for forgiveness and be willing to forgive others.



AT CHURCH:

Do you have hurt or resentment towards anyone at church? Pray for a softened heart and consider asking them to grab a meal with you. Do you feel you've hurt someone at church? Seek them out and ask for forgiveness.



IN THE WORLD:

Apologize to a coworker or to a neighbor for any offense you may have caused them. Urge others to be reconciled to each other. Volunteer for a cause that seeks reconciliation and justice for the marginalized. Be a peace maker and invite others into the body of Christ.

Dwell in Matthew 18:15-35 this week. Read through this passage slowly once and spend a few minutes silently reflecting on it. Then read the passage slowly again. Write a word or phrase that stand out to you. Read the passage

slowly once more. Expand on your thought in a few sentences. Finally, read through the passage slowly again and pray that God continues to stir this thought into action, that you might live out his Word in our world. Journal that prayer below and revisit it throughout your week.

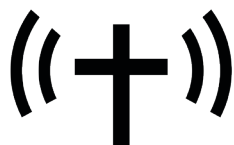
LECTIO DIVINA

Matthew 18:15-35

Word or phrase:

Expanded thought:

Prayer:



THE DISCIPLINE OF EVAN- GELISM

Everything in this study so far has been about presence, being with people. We have been challenged to take inventory of the people in our lives and to even seek out people we haven't considered before and to dwell among them. We invite them to the table and hear their stories. We serve them. We learn their gifts and talents. Why?

The end goal is to share the gospel with them.

The gospel, as Paul would write in Romans 5:8, is that God would show "his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." That is good news for us, those who are in Jesus.

To the unbeliever, the one who isn't found in Christ, the label of sinner can be quite harsh. It can sound judgmental and mean. This is how people now view the church: harsh, mean, judgmental. To them, evangelism is nothing more than a finger-wagging indictment from people who are "holier than thou."

Maybe we've lost the heart of evangelism.

The reason evangelism is last is because the road to evangelism is marked by the table and by a season of getting to know someone well. In order for us to call out the sin in the lives of others, we have to first earn the right to call out sin in their life.

In order for us to call out the sin in the lives of others, we have to first earn the right to call out sin in their lives.

Once we have a relationship with people filled with trust, we pray that God gives us the boldness and the opportunity to share the gospel. This might be an uncomfortable and awkward moment, but we regard no one according to the flesh any longer (2 Cor. 5:16). We see everyone in terms of eternity. We see souls who need to hear the gospel, so we sit at tables with people and we listen and we learn. Then we speak truth.

In John 14:12, Jesus says to his disciples, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." Think about that. Jesus says we will do greater things than he did. Jesus, most likely, means that the story of God will spread to more people through us, his disciples. Since Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, the gospel has started to spread to the corners of the earth.

Jesus has invited us into this call. He has given us homes, a church, neighborhoods, schools, jobs, paths. He has called us to share our lives and to share the gospel with these people so that the Father may be glorified.

THE DISCIPLINE OF EVANGELISM

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20



AT HOME:

Are there people in your family who don't know Jesus? Challenge yourself to be intentional with them and pray for opportunities to share the gospel with them.



AT CHURCH:

Ask your missional community and your church family to rally behind you as you evangelize. Ask them to keep you accountable to your ministry. Invite others to your missional community and show them what genuine community based on the grace of Jesus looks like.

Make disciples who make disciples. Urge your community to share the gospel with the people in their lives.

Discuss with your missional communities best ways to present the gospel to someone.



IN THE WORLD:

Keep your eyes open for people you encounter in your day-to-day life who might not know Christ. After inviting them to the table, pray for boldness and for opportunities to share the gospel with them.

LECTIO DIVINA

Dwell in John 14:1-14 this week. Read through this passage slowly once and spend a few minutes silently reflecting on it. Then read the passage slowly again. Write a word or phrase that stand out to you. Read the passage slowly once more.

Expand on your thought in a few sentences. Finally, read through the passage slowly again and pray that God continues to stir this thought into action, that you might live out his Word in our world. Journal that prayer below and revisit it throughout your week.

John 14:1-14

Word or phrase:

Expanded thought:

Prayer:

ABOUT THE LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio divina is a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures. Time set aside in a special way for lectio divina enables us to discover in our daily life an underlying spiritual rhythm. Within this rhythm, we discover an increasing ability to offer more of ourselves and our relationships

to the Father, and to accept the embrace that God is continuously extending to us in the person of his son, Jesus Christ.

Very often our concerns, our relationships, our hopes and aspirations, naturally intertwine with our meditations on the Scriptures. We can attend "with the ear of our hearts" to our own memories, listening for God's presence in the events of our lives. We experience Christ reaching out to us through our own memories. Our own personal story becomes salvation history.

How to Practice Lectio Divina

Choose a text of the Scriptures that you wish to pray. Place yourself in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become silent. Some Christians focus for a few moments on their breathing; others have a beloved "prayer word" or "prayer phrase" they gently recite.. For some, the practice known as "centering prayer" makes a good, brief introduction to lectio divina. Use whatever method is best for you and allow yourself to enjoy silence for a few moments.

Turn to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the "still, small voice" of a word or phrase that somehow says, "I am for you today." Do not expect lightning or ecstasies. In lectio divina, God is teaching us to listen to him, to seek him in silence. He does not reach out and grab us; rather, he gently invites us ever more deeply into his presence.

Take the word or phrase into yourself. Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns,

memories, and ideas. Do not be afraid of distractions. Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself that, when they rise up during lectio divina, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

Speak to God. Whether you use words, ideas, or images--or all three--is not important. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. And give to him what you have discovered during your experience of meditation. Experience God by using the word or phrase he has given you as a means of blessing and of transforming the ideas and memories that your reflection on his word has awakened. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

Rest in God's embrace. And when he invites you to return to your contemplation of his word or to your inner dialogue with him, do so. Learn to use words when words are helpful, and to let go of words when they no longer are necessary. Rejoice in the knowledge that God is with you in both words and silence, in spiritual activity and inner receptivity.

Fr. Luke Bysinger, OSB.

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