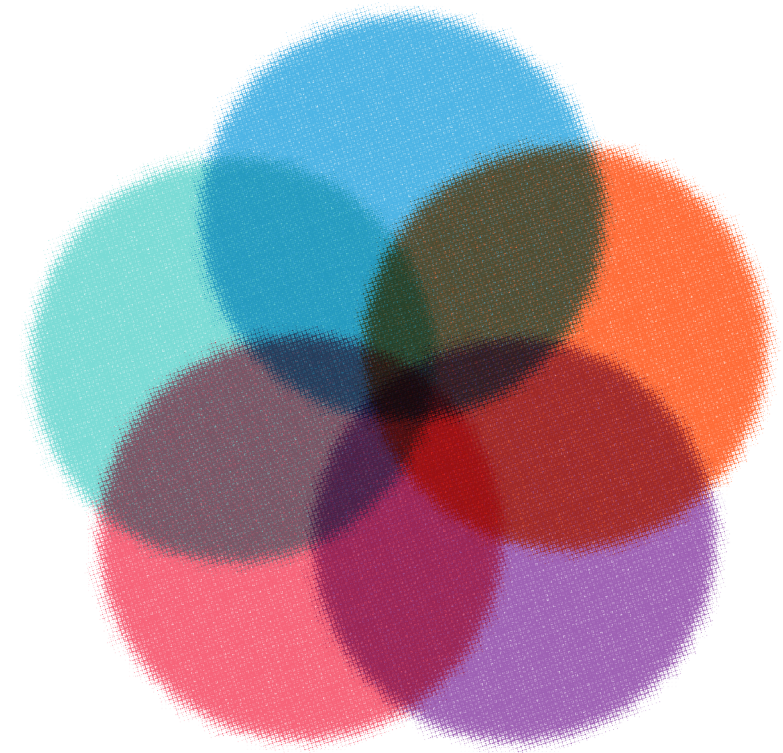


Pause, Eat, Ask, Commune, Examine.

Welcome to the Practices of PEACE, five ancient spiritual practices organized in a fresh, easy to understand way. This guidebook will help you discover or recover these simple practices, build them into the flow of your daily life, and experience renewed purpose and peace.

With these practices, we invite you to encounter the peace of Jesus Christ and pass it on to the people and places where you live, work, and love.

Come and experience PEACE.





PAUSE



EAT



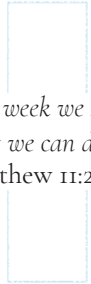
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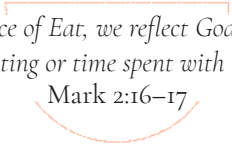
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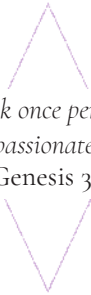
EXAMINE




One day each week we Pause from our labors so that we can delight in Jesus.
Matthew 11:28–30



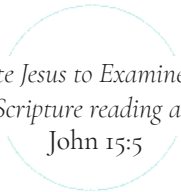
In the practice of Eat, we reflect God's hospitality through eating or time spent with two others.
Mark 2:16–17



We practice Ask once per week, taking a curious and compassionate posture to others.
Genesis 3:9



We commit to Commune in a small community of at least two other Christians to share in the mission of Jesus.
Hebrews 10:24–25



We invite Jesus to Examine us daily through Scripture reading and prayer.
John 15:5

PRACTICES OF
PEACE

Practices of PEACE

First Edition

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A Resource of Redeemer East Side.

150 W 83rd Street

New York, NY 10024

We'd love to hear from you!

Please reach out to us at eastside@redeemer.com.

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Edited by Judson Bengt Bergman

Designed by Katie Hodge

With the contributions of Lyn Cook, Abraham Cho, Iain Coston, Caitlin Kemp, Mary Cameron Taylor, and Brandon Bennett.

Made with love in New York City.

For all who are weary.

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WELCOME!

Dear friend,

To be a friend of Jesus is to be a person of peace. Peace is, after all, the parting gift that Jesus leaves with his disciples during the Last Supper (John 14:27). For 2,000 years, when Christians have gathered together they've greeted one another with the peace of Christ (though there aren't quite as many holy kisses [1 Peter 5:14] given during today's Passing of the Peace...). The gospel itself shows us that Jesus, in his life, death, and resurrection, has already secured our peace with God definitively and forever (Romans 5:1).

And yet, why does this all feel foreign to us so often? We rarely feel like a people of peace, and we often fail to experience this peace in the everyday spaces of our lives.

This guidebook is an invitation to drink deeply from the wells of Christ's peace in the ordinary moments of our lives through the rhythms and cadences of five simple spiritual practices: *Pause, Eat, Ask, Commune, Examine*. A practice is a repeated activity that opens space in a Christian's life to experience the gift of God's grace, drawing from the peace that is found in Jesus.

Our church, Redeemer East Side, adopted these Practices of PEACE in the second half of 2020, a year in which many of us struggled to find peace anywhere we looked. In the midst of a once-in-a-generation global pandemic, a painful reckoning with our nation's unshakable racism, and an explosive US Presidential election cycle, it felt harder than ever to experience the peace we all long for. It was during this time that our community agreed to be formed together through the Practices of PEACE. Our church's shared commitment to these practices has been a way for us to collectively open ourselves to Jesus, the One who is already reaching out to us — even (or especially!) in the moments when we feel most alone. Our prayer is that the content in these pages will help you do the same, in order to encounter Jesus in new and unexpected ways.

You'll notice this guidebook is arranged so that you'll walk through each of the Practices of PEACE one by one, with each new section building on those that come before. Practices are not meant to be separate or additive, but part of the daily flow of activities and relationships wherever God is sending you. Take your time getting acquainted with each of the practices, letting them slowly sink in; we recommend spending a month on each section. Each section includes some information and activities about the practice, a space to develop your daily rhythms to engage this practice, and then three biblical passages to reflect on in order to deepen your understanding of each practice. These can be

considered alone in a devotional setting, though they're meant to be discussed and shared with others. Consider inviting a friend to go through this guidebook with you! At the end of this book, you'll find a number of appendices that are meant to help you engage these practices once you've finished walking through the content of this book. We hope these resources will help you adopt these practices in a sustainable way that works for you.

Finally, know that these practices are not meant simply for your own internal growth, but as a way to share the love of God with those around you. If you aren't regularly encountering people who are in need, we encourage you to find a place to do so as you commit to practicing PEACE. If you're in NYC, check out Hope For New York for a database of nonprofits doing wonderful work for justice in our city. Serving our brothers and sisters in need is an essential way that we pass Christ's peace to others.

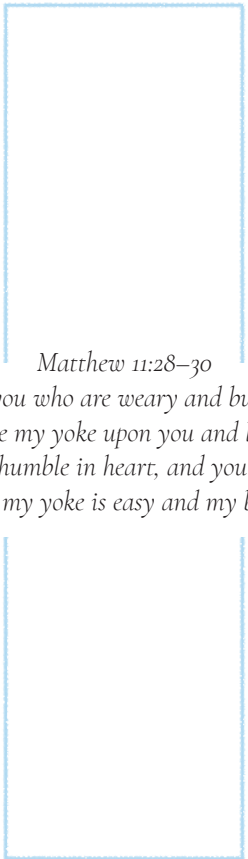
As you embark on this journey, we pray you'll discover that Jesus has invited each of us into a life of purpose with him—in the very spaces we already inhabit. As we are filled with his peace, God uses us to pass it on to the people and places where we live, work, and love. Through these practices we are transformed together—into the image and mission of Jesus himself.

Enjoy, and be well. God is with you.

With love,
Redeemer East Side Formation Team



PAUSE



Matthew 11:28–30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

PAUSE

One day each week we **Pause from our labors so that we can delight in Jesus**. We rest from our work and daily activities to remind ourselves that we are beloved children of God — not because of anything we have done, but purely through unmerited grace and immeasurable love. By resting in what God has already done for us, we are liberated from identifying ourselves with our accomplishments and productivity (Deuteronomy 5:15). When we Pause each week, we take time to play, recreate, and enjoy the gift of sabbath rest, where our souls are renewed and our burden is lightened (Matthew 11:28–30). From this place of refreshment, we then arise in mission to be God’s reconciling agents to an exhausted world (2 Corinthians 5:18).

If our rest is not an act of trust in God and relief from work, we are not really resting — or rejoicing — at all.

— Dru Johnson

DAILY RHYTHMS

Challenge

Experience peace and purpose by turning off distractions and tuning into God and his world.

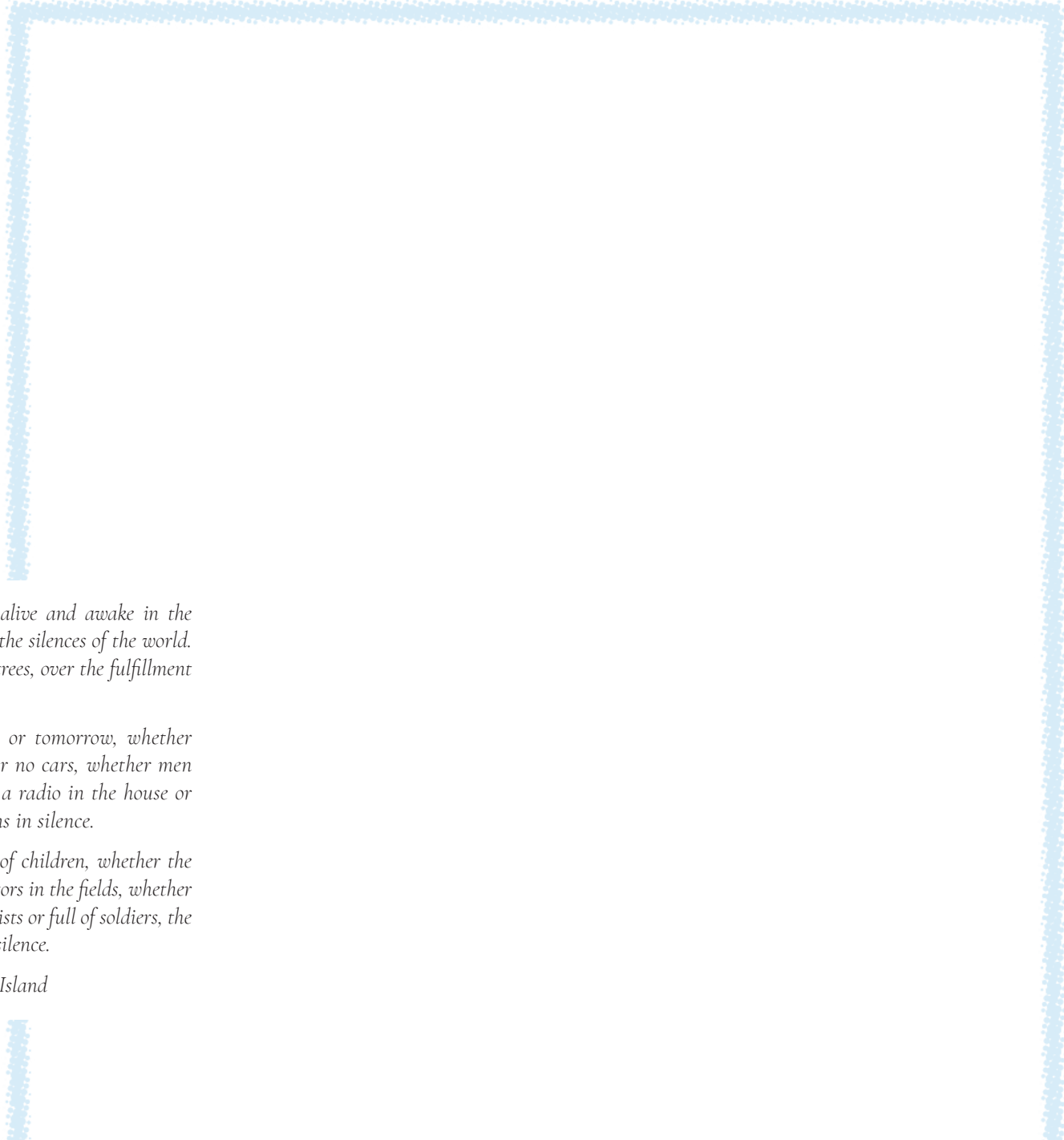
- Choose one day each week.
- Choose a three-hour block as a way to begin to enjoy God's Word, enjoy God's world, enjoy creativity and fun.
- Turn off distractions (notifications, social media, news).

Commitment

Prayerfully commit to small, sustainable steps in the practice of Pause, as Jesus invites us to be transformed together.

- What do you hope will be true of you from practicing Pause?
- Choose one day each week. Choose a three-hour block of no distractions. What day is most likely to have the least disruptions?
- Turn off distractions. What most distracts you? What barriers do you anticipate and can address in prayer?
- Enlist others. Who needs to know about your Pause practice to help make it happen?
- When you struggle, how can you remember and rejoice that you have everything you need through the gospel?





God is present, and His thought is alive and awake in the fullness and depth and breadth of all the silences of the world. The Lord is watching in the almond trees, over the fulfillment of His words (Jeremiah 1:11).

Whether the plane pass by tonight or tomorrow, whether there be cars on the winding road or no cars, whether men speak in the field, whether there be a radio in the house or not, the tree brings forth her blossoms in silence.

Whether the house be empty or full of children, whether the men go off to town or work with tractors in the fields, whether the liner enters the harbor full of tourists or full of soldiers, the almond tree brings forth her fruit in silence.

— Thomas Merton, *No Man Is An Island*

PAUSE IN DELIGHT

We begin the practices of PEACE with the practice of Pause. The definition of Pause is: One day each week we Pause from our labors so that we can delight in Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30). We can delight and celebrate because God's grace has been freely lavished on us. As Saint Augustine said, "The Christian should be an alleluia from head to foot." The practice of Pause lessens the grip of resentment, selfishness, and deceit in our lives, while increasing our expressions of love, joy and peace, even toward those different than ourselves.

God himself rests and delights. At the very beginning of the world, God rested on the seventh day to delight in all he created, saying, "It is good" (Genesis 1:31). And so, God calls his people to mimic him by ceasing our work and delighting one day each week. Nehemiah 8:9-12 tells of one moment of celebration and delight after the Israelites returned from exile and rebuilt Jerusalem's walls. Nehemiah and Ezra, the leaders of the people, read God's word, and this prompted collective weeping over sin and gratefulness for God's word restored to them. Their response is beautiful, yet God wanted even more for them. He wanted them to celebrate, for "the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). In like manner, every week is an opportunity to rest from daily work and receive the gifts of God, culminating in Jesus Christ.

Genesis 1:31-2:2

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

Nehemiah 8:9-12

9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

10 Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

11 The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve."

12 Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

1. What might you have been thinking and feeling if you heard these instructions to celebrate in Nehemiah 8? Why do you think celebration was so important for God's people?
2. How is the command to practice Sabbath an expression of delight and even celebration?
3. Do you associate the word "delight" with the Sabbath or the practice of Pause? Why or why not?
4. As you read the Pause description and challenge on pg 6?, what are you drawn toward? What questions or hesitations do you have?
5. How could the practice of Pause be good news to you? To a particular neighbor, coworker or friend?

A large grid of small dots, arranged in approximately 20 columns and 30 rows, intended for handwritten responses to the questions on the adjacent page.

PAUSE IN FREEDOM



Pause is an act of freedom. In establishing the Sabbath day, God wanted to remind the Israelites that they were no longer slaves, that their worth was more than mere productivity (Genesis 1:27–28). Each person is made in God’s image and therefore has inherent value. Their work is useful to cultivate God’s creation, and their rest is essential to delight in their Creator. This has particular relevance for us today. In practicing Sabbath, we refuse to be enslaved by our culture’s expectations, family demands, work performance, fears, hopelessness, or the need to prove ourselves. We don’t have to feel guilty or fearful about resting, because in Sabbath rest we remember that we can rest because Christ set us free to rest in his love.

Hebrews 4:1–10 draws a striking connection between observing Sabbath and the ultimate rest God provides through the gospel. Verses 9–10 say, “There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.” It is out of the salvation we receive through Christ that we are able to rest from the work of trying to justify ourselves or earn salvation by our own efforts. By appropriating this spiritual reality through the physical undertaking of rest, we are able to experience true inner soul-rest that flows out of security in the finished work of Christ.

This rest and freedom is not just for the privileged who can “take a day off.” That’s the cultural idea of a weekend or recreation. Instead, Sabbath disrupts the social order to say that all are equally in need of liberation and through Sabbath receive regular renewal. Galatians 5:1 exhorts, “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

Deuteronomy 5:12–15

12 Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. 15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

- 
1. Based on Deuteronomy 5, how does the gift of Sabbath connect with human freedom? How could Pause for Sabbath rest be a gift of freedom for you? For those around you?
 2. Sometimes we say “no” so that we can say “yes” to greater things. What can you eliminate or reduce to make room for Pause on a regular basis?
 3. Below are some practical categories of Sabbath rest. Which of these would enrich your practice of Pause?
 - Inactivity: Time that is unplanned, unstructured, and often requires little energy. It requires ceasing from scheduled activities that can otherwise fill up Sabbath time.
 - Avocational: Activities that you do for pleasure but that require time and energy. They include hobbies or other interests that others often do “for a living” (e.g. playing an instrument, taking a class). When choosing from these, choose activities that revive rather than drain energy.
 - Contemplative: Activities that more directly engage our hearts including prayer, Scripture, reflection, worship, sacraments. These activities allow us to develop inner rest and slow down our pace of life.
 - Recreational: Activities that involve our bodies and are generally considered fun (e.g. sports, hiking). Such activities can often be time-, energy- and cost-intensive, so we should choose wisely to select activities that increase delight, rest and worship.
 - Aesthetic: Activities that involve enjoying God’s beauty in creation, whether in nature or the arts (e.g. music, drama, visual arts). Beauty often rejuvenates us.
 - Pass the Peace: Activities that extend the delight of Sabbath to others (e.g. serving others, spending time with a friend, offering hospitality, giving a gift or writing a note of encouragement).
 4. Work and worship are intertwined. How could Pause for rest and worship influence your work life and vice versa?
- 



PAUSE IN TRUST

Pause is an act of trust. In establishing Sabbath rest, God reminds us that he is working and is ultimately in control of our lives. In observing Sabbath rest, we say that we are not God. The world doesn't slow down when we rest, and God reminds us that he doesn't need our contributions in order to keep it moving. God is pleased to accomplish his good will, and he meets all our needs.

Trusting in the finished work of Christ is the foundation of delight and rest. Without understanding our security in the gospel, we are drawn to the empty promises offered by our roles, abilities, accomplishments and credentials. Even when we take a break, we cannot really rest unless we trust. But Christ offers us the ultimate status as children of God solely on the basis of his grace. No accomplishment of ours will ever add to what Christ has already completed for us.

Trusting in the finished work of Christ also moves us beyond ourselves. Though we may feel we need more peace, security, and resources in order to serve others, Jesus' embodied peace can pass through us. In this time of great vulnerability in our city and nation, we have the opportunity to make a choice. As Andy Crouch writes in *Strong and Weak*, "The greatest spiritual struggle many of us face is to be willing to take off our bubble wrap." One important choice is to acknowledge and lower the "bubble wrap" or protective layers that block our ability to know, love, and serve people around us. When we make ourselves vulnerable for the good of the other we walk in the steps of Jesus.

Matthew 11:28–30

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Philippians 2:1–8

1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
used to his own advantage;

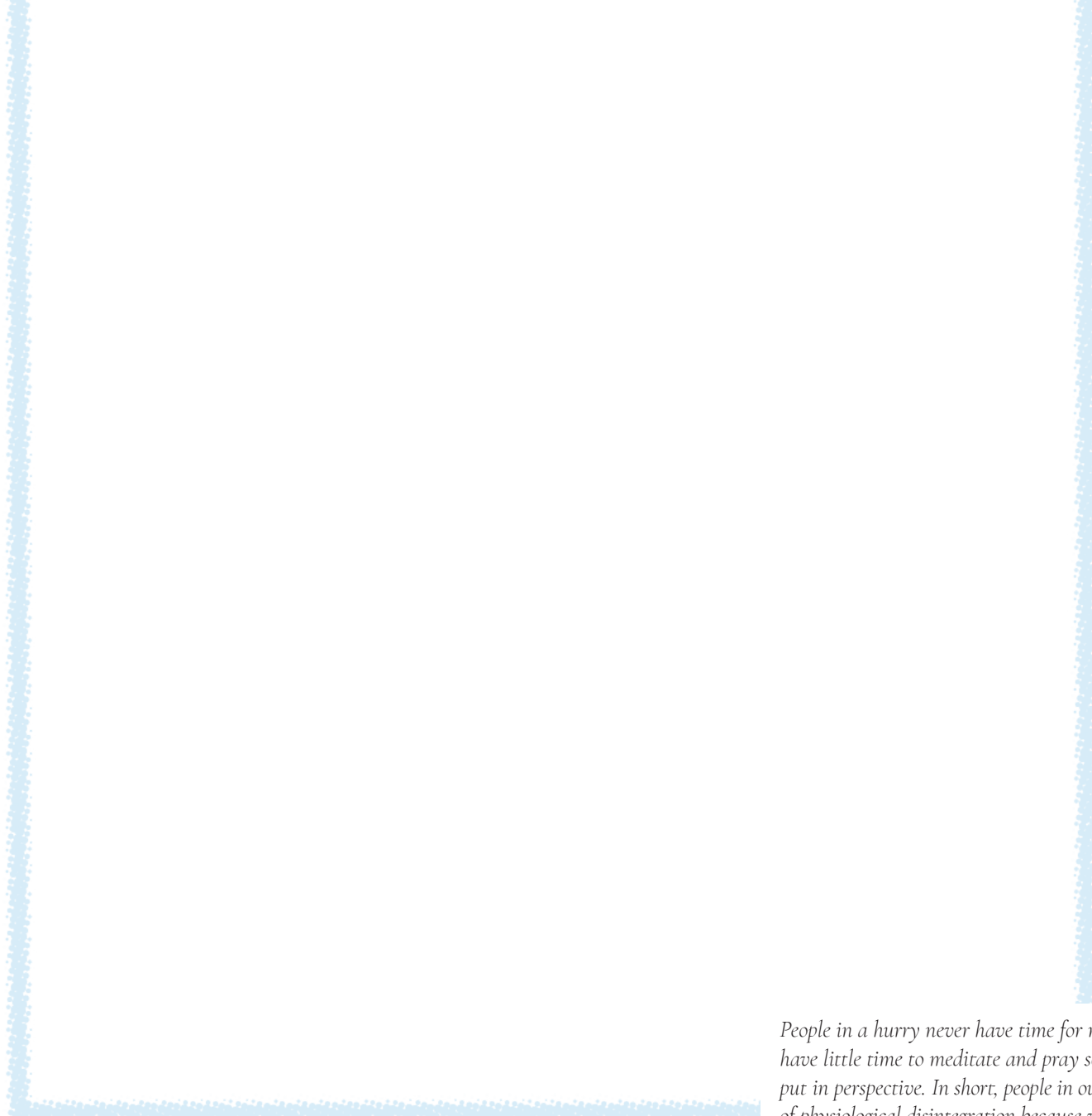
7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

1. What do you observe about Jesus in these scripture passages? Why was he able to demonstrate vulnerability even though he was greater than any human being?
2. How does Jesus' vulnerability influence your ability to trust? To Pause?
3. What is one way you could remove "bubble wrap" of protective layers in order to step out in service to others? Is there someone who could help you with this act of courage?
4. If you have not already done so, choose a Hope For New York affiliate (or another ministry near you) to serve with in order to share the peace of God.

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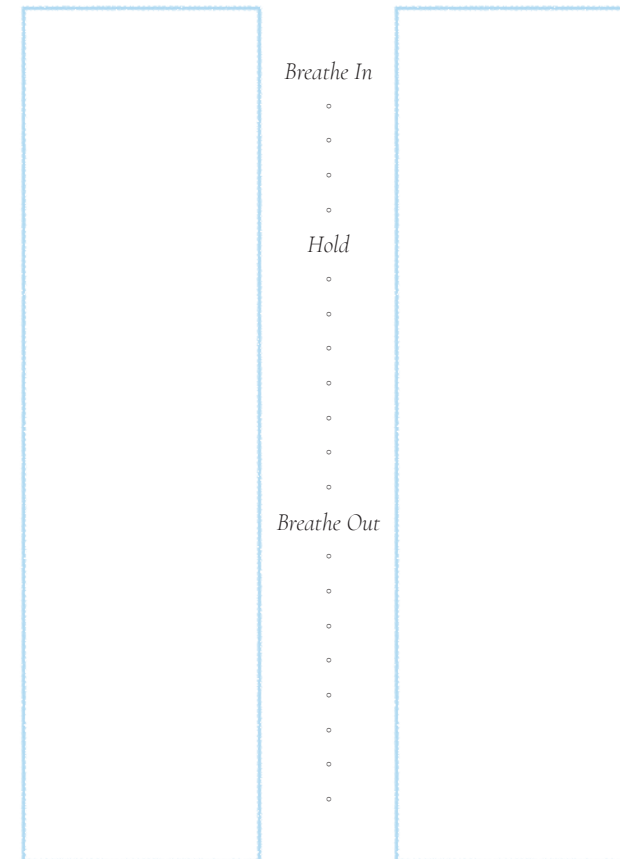


People in a hurry never have time for recovery. Their minds have little time to meditate and pray so that problems can be put in perspective. In short, people in our age are showing signs of physiological disintegration because we are living at a pace that is too fast for our bodies.

— Archibald Hart

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”



*The 4-7-8 breathing technique, or “relaxing breath”:
Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold the breath for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds.*

EAT

Mark 2:16–17

When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

EAT

When we Eat with others, we reflect the joyful hospitality of Jesus, elevating ordinary actions into an expression of Christ's restorative kingdom. Eating allows us to enjoy what God has so graciously given us, delighting in the food we eat and the people around us. This enjoyment is meant to be shared, and we're in the company of the Triune God when we're present with those who look, think, and believe differently than us (Mark 2:16–17). By doing this, we reenact God's love for us and upend social boundaries, working toward the reconciling society that God intends for the world. It should be no surprise, then, that a central aspect of Christian worship is a communal meal, the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:26), where God's grace is experienced in bodily form. Once nourished, we're sent out to the world, inviting others to experience God's grace alongside us. Thus, the way Christians eat prefigures heaven itself: the eternal banquet where we finally and forever enjoy perfect communion with God and all of creation (Revelation 19:9). This was the way Jesus ate when he walked this earth, and so we walk with Jesus when we eat, drink, and enjoy time with others.

So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

— 1 Corinthians 10:31

DAILY RHYTHMS

Challenge

Experience and spread hospitality with someone in your usual sphere and someone outside of it.

- Pray about who God wants you to be intentional with in the practice of Eat.
- Twice a week, reimagine a meal or other activity as a regular way to Eat with (1) someone different from you and (2) someone near to you.

Tips to succeed:

- Schedule ahead of time.
- Do something that you already enjoy and invite others into that activity or space.
- Consider taking a coffee break with someone over a video call.

Commitment

Prayerfully commit to small, sustainable steps in the practice of Eat, as Jesus invites us to be transformed together.

- Pray for people. Who is near you that you will enjoy intentional time with? Who is different from you — in faith or culture — that you will enjoy intentional time with?
- Plan ahead. What will you do with your people once a week?
- Limit distractions. What most distracts you from the practice of Eat?



PRAYERS AROUND A MEALTIME

The ordinary, mundane act of eating is an expression of God's ability to bring meaning and nourishment into all areas of life. Let's accept this gift with thanksgiving. As you Eat this month, consider praying in new ways with these mealtime prayers used by Christians around the world.

Unknown Author unless otherwise stated

God is great, God is good;
and we thank Him for our food.
By His hand we all are fed.
Thank you for our daily bread.
Amen.



You, Master almighty, created all things for Your name's sake; You gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to You; but to us You freely gave spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Your Servant.

— *The Didache*, first century

For the infinite variety of your creative expression, I praise you, O God. You have made even the necessary act of eating a nurturing comfort and a perpetual delight.

— Douglas Kaine McKelvey, *Every Moment Holy*

Be present at our table, Lord, May this food restore our strength, giving new energy to tired limbs, new thoughts to weary minds. May this drink restore our souls, giving new vision to dry spirits, new warmth to cold hearts. And once refreshed, may we give new pleasure to you, who gives us all.

Amen.

Be here and everywhere adored.
Your people bless, and grant that
we may feast in paradise with you.

Amen.

— John Wesley

Give us grateful hearts, our Father, for all thy mercies, and make us mindful of the needs of others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

— Book of Common Prayer, *Grace Before Meals*

Lord Jesus, our brother, be with us today.

Bless our happy gathering,

and bless this meal that we share.

Protect us all, and help us to grow in your love.

Lord Jesus, we praise your holy name for ever.

— Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *A Book of Blessings*

We give Thee thanks, our Father, for the Resurrection which Thou hast manifested to us through Jesus, Thy Son; and even as this bread which is here on this table was formerly scattered abroad and has been made compact and one, so may Thy Church be reunited from the ends of the earth for Thy Kingdom, for Thine is the power and glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

— St. Athanasius, fourth century

Bless the food before us

The family beside us

And the love between us

Amen.

For food in a world where many walk in hunger;

For faith in a world where many walk in fear;

For friends in a world where many walk alone;

We give you thanks, O Lord.

A RECIPE FOR HOSPITALITY

Share the sacredness of a meal, recognizing the humanity of all people and the opportunity we have to invite others to experience God's grace alongside us.

Aarti Sequeira's Naan Recipe

Pillowy Indian flatbread, yields 4 to 6 servings

Set aside some time this week to prayerfully prepare this bread and consider how you might use it to extend hospitality, whether by inviting someone over, dropping it off at a friend's place, or sharing it with one of our unhoused neighbors.

Ingredients

¾ cup lukewarm water (~100° F)	2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp active dry yeast	2 tbsp plain yogurt
1 tsp sugar, plus 1 tsp extra	1 tsp fennel seeds (optional)
2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for rolling	1 tsp kalonji (nigella seeds, optional)
1 tsp fine sea salt	Melted butter for slathering on the finished naans
⅛ tsp baking powder	Coarse sea salt for sprinkling

Gluten free: substitute 2¼ cups of a gluten-free all purpose flour mix for the regular flour, and add 1¼ tsp of xanthum gum.

In a glass, dissolve dry yeast and 1 tsp of sugar with warm water. Set aside for 10 minutes, until frothy.

Meanwhile, sift flour, salt, 1 teaspoon of sugar and baking powder into a large bowl. Once yeast is frothy, stir oil and yogurt into it. Pour into the dry ingredients, add the seeds if desired. Using a fork, mix the ingredients. When the dough is about to come together, use your hands. Pray as you are kneading the dough, that Jesus would show you he is the bread of life. It will feel like there isn't enough flour at first, but keep going until it transforms into a soft, slightly sticky dough. As soon as it comes together, stop kneading. Cover with plastic wrap or a damp tea towel and let it sit in a warm, non-drafty place for 2 to 4 hours.

When you're ready to roll, place two bowls on your counter: one with extra flour and one with water. The dough will be soft and sticky. Separate into 6 equal portions and lightly roll each one in the bowl of extra flour to keep them from sticking to each other.

To shape naan: using a floured rolling pin on a lightly floured surface, roll each piece of dough into a teardrop shape, 8 to 9 inches long, 4 inches wide at its widest point and ¼ inch thick. As you roll, thank God that he is working in your life and the lives of those you love and those who are different from you. Once you've formed the general shape, you can pick it up by one end and wiggle to stretch it out a little. Repeat with the rest of the dough (with the gluten-free version use your fingertips instead of rolling it).

Warm a large cast iron skillet over high heat until it's nearly smoking. Have a large lid and melted butter ready. Dampen your hands in the bowl of water and pick up one naan, flipping it from one hand to the other to lightly dampen it. Gently lay it in the skillet, and set your timer for 1 minute. The dough should start to bubble. After 1 minute, flip the naan; if it has blackened, that's traditional! Cover the skillet and cook 1 more minute. Remove from the skillet, brush with butter, sprinkle with coarse sea salt and place in a towel lined dish. Repeat with the remaining naans and serve. In this act of hospitality, you go with Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life for everyone you are serving.

COMMUNION AS HEALING

Commune with God and others, recognizing the past, present, and future significance of a shared meal. Use the space on the opposite page to reflect on your own experience with the sacrament of communion.

A Testimony

God created food as necessary and good (Genesis 1:31), yet for many people the joy of food has unraveled and become lost in shame, control or some unnatural symbol of worth. What about you? When you are invited to the spiritual practice of Eat, what do you feel — delight, dread, or something in between?

For me, I experienced food and eating as the enemy. I knew I needed healing from this in body, mind, and spirit, and over years tried lots of good tools, as we all should, to help combat my eating issues. But along my journey, the Lord's Supper was one surprising avenue toward healing. The physical experience of taking the bread and the cup slowly opened my mind. Something that was undeniably good, the bread of God's grace, was linked to something that I had considered an evil enemy. For his love embodied in the bread is not small or meant to be controlled — it is an extravagant feast. Since physical communion with God was given through an earthly meal and pointed toward unfettered communion at a wedding supper with Jesus, would I dine with him in joy now, or would I hide and control? Could I practice joy in eating, rehearsing our ultimate meal with him? Over time, God's love expressed in the bread of communion penetrated my hatred of "bread" and my body. His love overwhelmed the enemies of shame, guilt, and fear and gave freedom.

We are invited to the table in the practice of Eat. We are invited to taste God's abundant healing and grace. We can walk toward healing together, for Revelation 19:9 reminds us, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

A Prayer for those struggling with or recovering from eating disorders

O God of restoration, we pray for those whose relationships with food are fraught. Make us sympathetic to the deep-seated nature of this struggle with such a constant and fundamental part of life. Touch these thy beloved, and for them make food a sacrament whereby they take in the fruit of thy world and turn it back into worship of thee. We ask thee to rebuke, dismantle, and destroy all powers and principalities of distorted self-image, unhealthy beauty conventions, and self-harm. Give them treatment, therapy, support, and endurance for the long road of recovery, that they may taste and see that the Lord Jesus Christ is good, in the sweetness of the Holy Spirit and the satisfaction of the Father, one God, now and forever. Amen.

— Terry Stokes



EAT TO ENACT JOY

Christianity can be seen as a movement committed to the human being in its fullness. In this, the Christian can celebrate God's commitment to his creation as good things that should be received with joy. In fact, the biblical story pictures God lifting up his creation from beginning to end, and it is only the powers of sin and death that attempt to distort and denigrate it. Today's scripture passage is the moment in which Jesus appears to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead. While we might be conditioned to assume that Jesus, somehow now alive after his death, would no longer have a human body that could or would eat food, the story tells us otherwise. Jesus eats real food, and his appearance before his disciples understandably provokes a mixture of skepticism and joy (v. 41).

Earlier in the chapter, Luke tells us that two of the disciples said, "We had hoped that [Jesus] was the one to redeem Israel" (v. 21). Think about it: the disciples' hopes were totally dashed when they witnessed their Teacher publicly crucified—all their dreams for Israel were lost. But now, Jesus has been raised from the dead, blesses their food (v. 30), and eats. This is no ordinary human occurrence, but neither is it a ghost story. Jesus is a real human being with a real human body on the other side of death, and he is eating. No wonder, then, that his disciples were simultaneously joyful and slow to believe.

Christianity gives permission to delight in one another over food. The God of the Bible delights in his world, which is why he has promised to make it new. In Genesis 1, God calls his creation good. When Jesus is both born as a baby and resurrected, he calls his creation good. And when all things are made new, God will again call his restored creation good. Thus, it only makes sense for those who know this story to enact joy by eating food with others.

Luke 24:36–43

36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.



1. The resurrected Jesus ate with his disciples. What do you think the disciples were thinking and feeling in this moment? What did Jesus appearing to and eating with them confirm?
2. How might you reframe eating to be a joyful practice where you want to invite others in?
3. The Eat challenge is to help us delight in the food God has given us and enjoy it with others. Using the guidelines on pg 30, write down how you will commit to the Eat challenge.

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EAT TO ENACT HOSPITALITY

Eating in the company of Jesus is an act of revolution. It is a way to break down barriers, lift up those who are forgotten, and treat every human being with dignity. Thus, the practice of Eat creates a community made up of people who seemingly should have nothing to do with each other. In this scripture passage, a Pharisee invites Jesus to a meal in his own home. (Pharisees were famous for their careful observance of the Jewish law, making pains to avoid any hint of defilement.) But then a woman “who was a sinner” wanders in from the streets to wipe Jesus’ feet with her hair and ointment. Though this would be an odd thing to do in 21st Century American culture, it would be seen as offensive in 1st Century Palestine, since her actions are intimate and suggestive. But unlike the Pharisee, Jesus is unfazed. Instead of being horrified, he sees her as a human being, accepts her presence, and wipes her slate clean.

Here’s what Tim Chester says about the radical, cross-cultural grace displayed in this story:

Involvement with people, especially the marginalized, begins with a profound grasp of God’s grace. We can easily regard marginalized people in the church as ‘a problem’ to be ‘handled’. But the grace of God turns out to be uncomfortable and embarrassing. The radical grace of Jesus disrupts social situations. And we don’t like church to be disrupted. So often our instincts are to keep our distance. But the Son of God ate with sinners. He’s not embarrassed by them. He lets them kiss his feet. He’s the friend of riff-raff, traitors, the unrespectable, drunks, druggies, prostitutes, the mentally ill, the broken and the needy — people whose lives are a mess.

Jesus embodies hospitality: “regularly inviting people, especially those who are different from us, into our lives through the sharing of time, attention, and resources.” It’s easy to remain coolly distant from people without really getting to know them. But meals slow you down, fostering mutuality and identification with your tablemates. Eating joyfully and engaging in life alongside others creates a community of difference that follows in the footsteps of Jesus. In today’s society that seems especially graceless, practicing this kind of hospitality might just change the world.

Luke 7:36–50

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.”

40 Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.”
“Tell me, teacher,” he said.

41 “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

43 Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”
“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.

44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

1. Based on the scripture reading, describe the kind of community that Jesus creates. How does he go about it?
2. Have you ever personally experienced a community that invites in others who are different? What was this like?
3. Take inventory of people you cross paths with regularly. Who is someone you are tempted to dismiss easily?
4. Think of specific ways that you can enact hospitality. Take a few minutes to reflect and write down your specific ideas.

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EAT TO ENACT HOPE

Many of us who are Christian have heard a lot of talk about the gospel, which means “good news.” But what is the gospel — what’s the news about anyway? The late theologian Robert Jenson once described it as both a story and a promise. That is, the gospel is a story about a particular God doing things with and for his particular people, the people of God. We eventually learn that God’s aim is ultimately for the whole world. Of course, there can be both bad stories and good ones, sad endings and happy endings. In the story that God tells, sad endings never have the final word — since his Son Jesus has been raised from the dead. That’s what also makes the gospel a promise: God’s story promises you that the world is going somewhere. It will be a world of love, beauty, and justice where God and humans live together at last. God’s Spirit is gathering a community of people from every background and culture, and since communities usually celebrate with food, there’s going to be a meal.

In these scripture passages, we read about the vision of this meal. Revelation calls it the marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus calls it his great banquet. When we consider these two passages together, we catch a glimpse of what the vision of the world will one day be. There will be a united community that has been purged of every evil and vice (Rev. 19:8) where God and human beings will at last live together in love. And lest anyone think that Jesus prioritizes the rich and the powerful, it is, in fact, today’s outcast who gets the royal treatment (Luke 14:13, 21). According to God, this is where the world is headed.

Here’s how Richard Foster characterizes the Christian who has hope:

The high and the mighty and the weak and the lowly all celebrate together. Who can be high or low at the festival of God? Together the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless all share in the goodness of God. Celebration is not just an attitude but also something that we do. We laugh. We sing. We dance. We play. The psalmist described the joy-filled celebration of the people of God complete with timbrel and dance, with trumpet and lute and harp, with strings and pipe and loud clashing cymbals. In celebration we celebrate! Celebration is one of those things that does not diminish with use. Rather it multiplies. Celebration begets more celebration. Joy begets more joy. Laughter begets more laughter. I have found that times of genuine celebration have the potential of bringing healing and wholeness to the entire community. So ... let’s celebrate!

As we practice Eat, we recall the joyful hope that God has given us. There is much to look forward to, and with so much anticipation, the Christian community is ready to start all sorts of mini celebrations. That is why we Eat with others, especially with others not like us: because we have a confidence that eternity will look like one big family party.

Revelation 19:6–9

6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

“Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!

For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.

8 Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear.”

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)

9 Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

Luke 14:15–24

15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

16 Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

18 “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

21 “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

22 “‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

1. What kinds of things do people associate with the church? What kinds of things do you associate with a banquet meal (i.e. a party)? How might we lead the church to be more like a party?
2. How do your meals express your vision for life? Think about who's invited, how they're served, and what you hope to achieve. How does it compare with Jesus' banquet meal?
3. Take a moment to write down what you need to celebrate from your time of practicing Eat.
4. Who will you continue to Eat with? How can you pray for hope to be nurtured in their lives?

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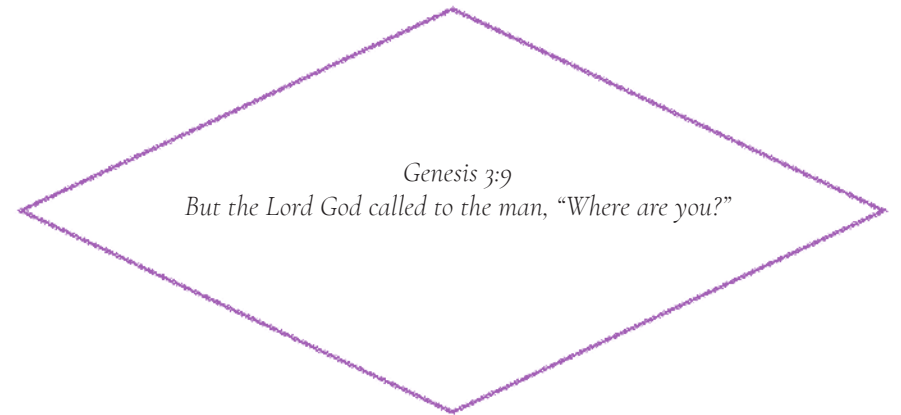
Mark 2:16–17
When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

*Aching to delight in the unseen moments
Alone in my kitchen under His condolence
My worried heart and hurried mind
Slow down while kneading the dough He provides*

*I remember the One who truly sustains me
Observing the ingredients that He gave me
Accepting that I cannot go further
Until having rest and food that nurtures*

*Scooting up to the table to a prepared meal
I take a moment to just be still
You give us a seat at Your table Lord
Today always and forevermore*

— Louanne Elliott



ASK

We Ask questions the way Jesus did, with a curious and compassionate posture, to spark rich, authentic spiritual conversations. Christians are sent out to love all of our neighbors, and we grow in our love for them as we learn more about their history, heart, hopes, and hurts. What are they passionate about? Who do they want to be? Why are they hurting? In asking good questions, we emulate Jesus, the man of questions. The Gospels record Jesus asking over 300 questions; he often posed questions of his own in response to those demanding answers (Mark 2:6–9). Yet his questions drew people out, going beyond simple information gathering and directing each person toward the ultimate answer beyond what they even knew they needed (Mark 8:27–29). If Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life for all mankind, then he is the answer to the deepest needs of every human heart. When we ask meaningful questions and listen well to the answers, we can be conduits of God’s grace and truth. God began this adventure of asking, and we follow Jesus when we practice peace-filled, attentive listening (Genesis 3:9, James 1:19).

Jesus didn't come to tell us the answers to the questions of life, he came to be the answer.

— Tim Keller

DAILY RHYTHMS

Challenge

Join Jesus' work through asking thoughtful questions with someone in your usual sphere and someone outside of it.

- Practice Ask with someone each week, drawing from the pool of people with whom you practice Eat. Especially consider someone who believes, looks or thinks differently than you. Pray for friendship, mutuality, and gospel love to be shared.
- Ask God "What are you up to in this person's life? How can I join you in the work you're doing?"
- Listen for what "good news" sounds like for this person. Try the 4H's listed on the next page.

Commitment

Prayerfully commit to small, sustainable steps in the practice of Ask, as Jesus invites us to be transformed together.

- See who is available. Who will you Ask questions of and listen to?
- Be caring. What's the best way to meet up? A Zoom call (or old fashioned phone call) could still mean a lot for many people.
- Be thoughtful. Think about questions before you meet up.



WHAT AM I ASKING THIS MONTH?

Write down four main questions you want to focus on this month — questions to Ask God, yourself or others. Take some time to pray about and reflect on them, and consider sharing them with someone else, so that we can inspire and encourage one another as we Ask. Use the following page to jot down other thoughtful questions that arise as you practice Ask this month.

Try starting with the 4Hs:

History: Tell me more of your story. Where are you from?
Was spirituality part of your upbringing?

Heart: What are you passionate about? What do you love?
Where did that come from?

Hopes: What do you hope for out of life? What are your dreams
and ambitions?

Hurts: What is one thing you'd want to change about your life
today? What's hard?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4



30 DAYS WITH THE QUESTIONS OF JESUS

As we practice Ask, we take our cue from Jesus, the master of questions. Begin or end each day this month by meditating on one question of Jesus, reflecting on its corresponding Scripture reference and asking what God might be trying to show you through each question. Check the questions off as you go.

- [1] **Matt 7:3** Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?
- [2] **Matt 15:3** And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?
- [3] **Matt 16:9** Do you still not understand?
- [4] **Mark 8:17–18** Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember?
- [5] **Luke 8:30** What is your name?
- [6] **Luke 14:31** Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?
- [7] **Luke 18:8** When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?
- [8] **Luke 24:41** Do you have anything here to eat?
- [9] **John 1:38** What do you want?
- [10] **John 14:10** Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?
- [11] **Matt 9:4** Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?
- [12] **Matt 5:47** And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?
- [13] **Matt 9:28** Do you believe that I am able to do this?
- [14] **Matt 16:15** Who do you say I am?
- [15] **Mark 2:8** Why are you thinking these things?

- [16] **John 5:47** But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?
- [17] **John 21:16** Do you love me?
- [18] **Matt 6:28** And why do you worry about clothes?
- [19] **Matt 14:31** Why did you doubt?
- [20] **Matt 16:26** What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?
- [21] **Luke 10:36** Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?
- [22] **Luke 12:26** Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?
- [23] **John 5:44** How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?
- [24] **John 6:67** You do not want to leave too, do you?
- [25] **Matt 8:26** You of little faith, why are you so afraid?
- [26] **Matt 6:27** Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?
- [27] **Matt 27:46** My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
- [28] **Mark 9:50** Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again?
- [29] **Luke 12:57** Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?
- [30] **Mark 3:23** How can Satan drive out Satan?

ASK THROUGH ART & LITERATURE

Art and literature help us cultivate curiosity and compassion, both important aspects of the practice of Ask, and so we invite you to experience the beauty and history of the sculptures along the literary walk in Central Park (mid-park at 66th St). If you're in NYC, invite a friend to walk and discuss together!

As you approach a statue, reflect on the quote of its corresponding author. Then consider the question posed and discuss your thoughts with someone around you. Feel free to underline or mark up these quotes, and use the open space on the following page to reflect further, inviting the Holy Spirit to help you grow in your curiosity and compassion.

William Shakespeare

There are more things in heaven and earth...than are dreamt of in your philosophies.

Do you agree? Why or why not? What do you think people wish were true that goes beyond philosophy or science?

Sir Walter Scott

Teach your children poetry; it opens the mind, lends grace to wisdom and makes the heroic virtues hereditary.

Do you agree? Why or why not? Do you have a favorite poem? Why do you suppose it has faded from the central cultural role it once played?

Fitz-Greene Halleck

I sorrow that all fair things must decay.

With the past year that might as well be called the year of decay, how are we to hold lament and hope in tension?

Robert Burns

O wad some Power the giftie gie us, to see oursels as ithers see us!

In your history, how have others' opinions influenced you, for the good or for the bad?

Sojourner Truth [Women's Rights Statue]

And what is that religion that sanctions, even by its silence, all that is embraced in the 'Peculiar Institution'? If there can be anything more diametrically opposed to the religion of Jesus, than the working of this soul-killing system—which is as truly sanctioned by the religion of America as are her ministers and churches—we wish to be shown where it can be found.

The “peculiar institution” is the institution of slavery. Sojourner Truth is saying there is no more damning indictment of the church than silence of the midst of injustice. Do you agree? Is silence complicity? Why or why not?

Susan B. Anthony [Women's Rights Statue]

I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do, because I notice it always coincides with their own desires.

How do we parse the voice of God from our ego?

Elizabeth Cady Stanton [Women's Rights Statue]

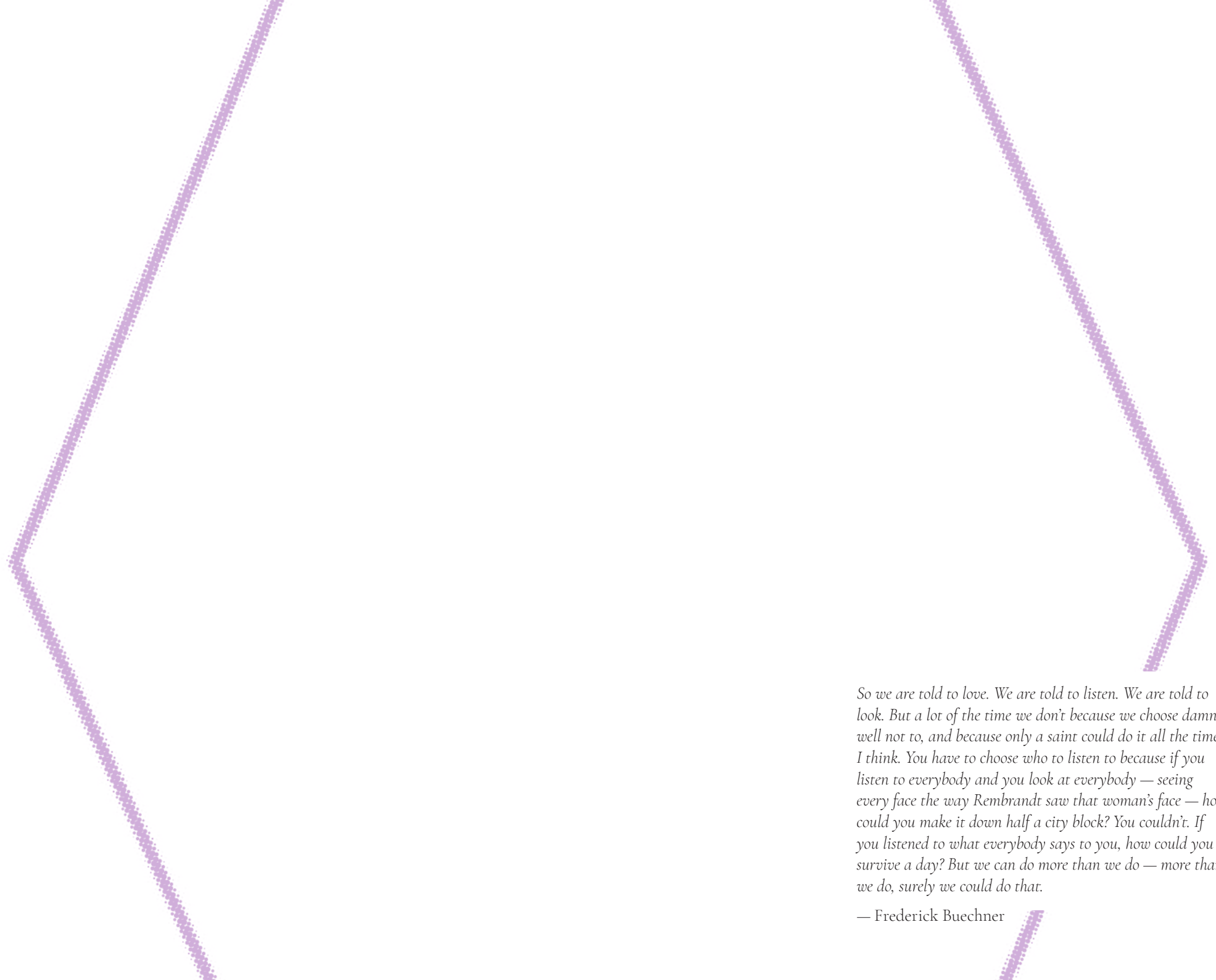
To live for a principle, for the triumph of some reform by which all mankind are to be lifted up—to be wedded to an idea—may be, after all, the holiest and happiest of marriages.

Do you agree? Why or why not? Does your purpose for living align with this statement?

Christopher Columbus

[The indigenous peoples in the new world] would make fine servants...With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want...They are so naïve and so free with their possessions...[On my return voyage I will bring] as much gold as [their Majesties] need...and as many slaves as they ask... Thus the eternal God, our Lord, gives victory to those who follow His way over apparent impossibilities.

Individuals, and our collective history, embody both good and evil. In light of this, do you think a statue of Christopher Columbus is needed or not needed? Why?



So we are told to love. We are told to listen. We are told to look. But a lot of the time we don't because we choose damn well not to, and because only a saint could do it all the time, I think. You have to choose who to listen to because if you listen to everybody and you look at everybody — seeing every face the way Rembrandt saw that woman's face — how could you make it down half a city block? You couldn't. If you listened to what everybody says to you, how could you survive a day? But we can do more than we do — more than we do, surely we could do that.

— Frederick Buechner

ASK WITH CURIOSITY

Building on delight in God and his gifts through the practices of Pause and Eat, we rise to focus on the third of the Practices of PEACE: Ask.

We Ask questions the way Jesus did, with a curious and compassionate posture, to spark rich, authentic spiritual conversations. Christians are sent out to love all of our neighbors, and we grow in our love for them as we learn more about their history, heart, hopes, and hurts. What are they passionate about? Who do they want to be? Why are they hurting? In asking good questions, we emulate Jesus, the man of questions.

The Gospels record Jesus asking over 300 questions. Some of his questions were posed in response to those demanding answers (Mark 2:6-9). Most of his questions sought to draw people out, to show them their hidden motives and deepest desires (Mark 8:27-29). If Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life for all mankind, then he is the answer to the deepest needs of every human heart. When we ask meaningful questions and listen well to the answers, we can be conduits of God's grace and truth. God began this adventure of asking, and we follow Jesus when we ask good questions and practice attentive listening (Genesis 3:9, James 1:19).

When we are curious or interested in someone, we don't need tips to help us understand him or her. Instead, we let go of assumptions and become genuinely interested in another, fostering an honest, mutual friendship. Christians are called to listen so well to their friends, neighbors, and co-workers that they understand what makes them tick and can communicate how the gospel is good news for them.

Genesis 3:9

But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Mark 2:6-9

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?'"

1. Throughout the Bible God asks so many questions. Why might an omniscient God ask questions if he must already know the answer? What implications does that have for your relationships?

2. In his classic work, *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer exhorts Christians to ask and listen. What from the quote below resonates with you? In what ways do we “refuse to give ear to our brother [or sister] on lesser subjects”?

There is a kind of listening with half an ear that presumes already to know what the other person has to say. It is an impatient, inattentive listening, that despises the brother and is only waiting for a chance to speak and thus get rid of the other person. This is no fulfillment of our obligation, and it is certain that here too our attitude toward our brother only reflects our relationship to God. It is little wonder that we are no longer capable of the greatest service of listening that God has committed to us, that of hearing our brother's confession, if we refuse to give ear to our brother on lesser subjects...Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been committed to them by Him who is Himself the great listener and whose work they should share. We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God.

3. The Ask challenge is meant to help us ask questions the way Jesus did, with the goal of building relationships. Turn to the Ask commitment on pg. 58 of the guidebook and write down your commitment.

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ASK WITH COMPASSION

Throughout Scripture God is characterized as compassionate, meaning “to suffer with.” Compassion goes beyond empathy and sympathy, in that it alleviates the suffering of another. Jesus, full of compassion, came close and identified in our suffering by becoming a human and alleviating our ultimate suffering through his sacrificial death. We are called to walk in Jesus’ footsteps with compassion in the practice of Ask.

Ask becomes an act of compassion when one allows the compassionate spirit of Christ to fill and fuel them. Today’s passage, Mark 8:1–10, illuminates Jesus’ compassion that moved him to suffer for and with humanity. Christians are recipients of the boundless mercy of God and thus approach every person humbly. Standing alongside others, not above them, we are filled with compassion because we understand that God uses all things to draw people to faith and to transform us to his image. When we ask with compassion, we see beneath the surface to the heart, hopes, and hurts to others. Then as fellow people with needs, we can love people with the love of Christ and point them to Jesus who is the true source of help. In this way our lives become a window through which someone else can see and experience the grace of God.

Mark 8:1–10

1 During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 2 “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.”

4 His disciples answered, “But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?”

5 “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked. “Seven,” they replied.

6 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so. 7 They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. 8 The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 9 About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, 10 he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

1. Describe what compassion looked and felt like in this passage. If you were to insert yourself in this parable, who would you be?
2. Do you consider yourself a fellow sufferer in need of compassion? Why or why not?
3. How could practicing Ask with compassion, approaching others as fellow sufferers, impact the relationship you have with them? Be as specific as possible.
4. Write down a few ways that you can practice Ask with compassion. Turn to p. 10 of the Ask guidebook to write down the questions you will focus on with your friends.



ASK WITH CONFIDENCE


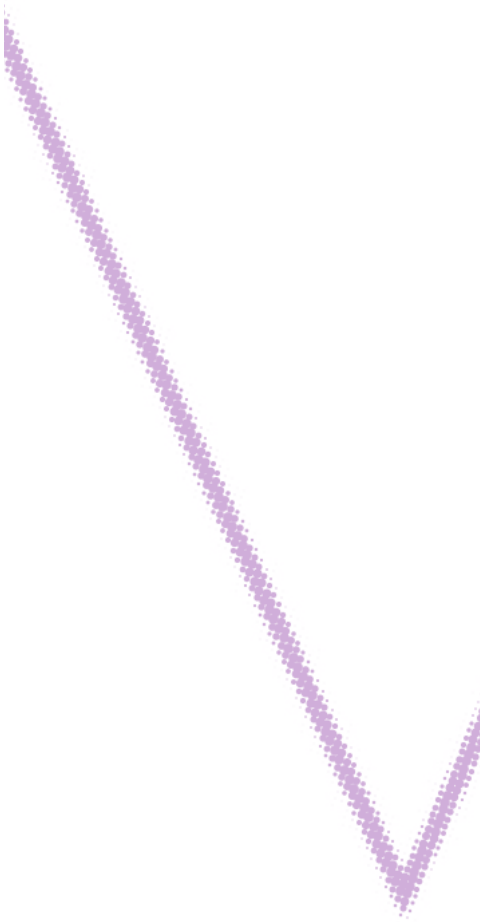
The practice of Ask not only helps us emulate the humble compassion of Jesus, but it also helps us exude his humble confidence. A Christian's confidence comes from the power of the Holy Spirit and from an identity that's rooted in unshakeable love and truth. From there grows the confidence to move into our everyday places, able to expand our circles of friendship and equipped to ask, listen, and even "give an answer...for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

Hebrews 4:14-16 highlights this confidence in Jesus. In a hostile world, we must not be ashamed of Christ (v. 14). The strength to practice Ask and communicate what is true comes from Jesus. He is with us and will sustain us when things go awry. All of this leads to an invitation of utmost importance, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace" (v. 16). We draw near to God in prayer, because we approach a king who has endured suffering to bring all people to himself and will not withhold grace and help for all who seek him. As C. S. Lewis said, "The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose."

Hebrews 4:14-16

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

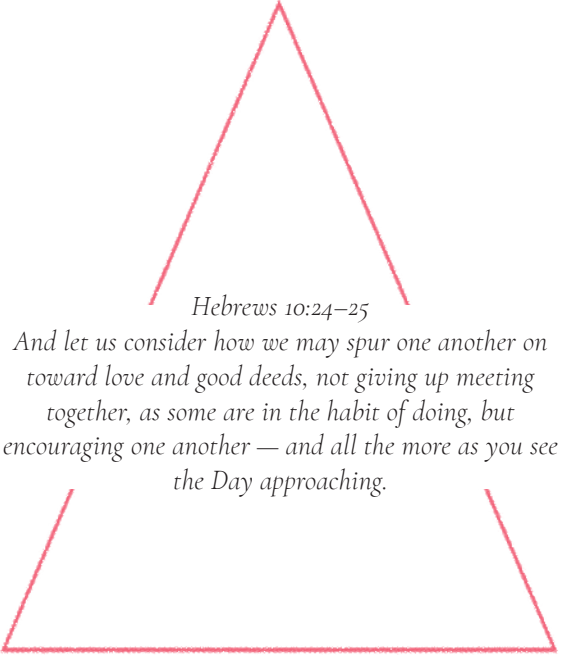


- 
1. What's the relationship between confidence and confession?
 2. Why can we draw near to the God of grace with confidence (v. 16)? What implications does that have on the way you practice Ask?
 3. Where do you need "God's grace to help" you speak and Ask (v.16)? In what ways do your friends, with whom you are practicing Ask, need grace and help?
 4. Pray together with confidence for your friends to experience grace. How could using the prayer log (pg. 148) deepen your confidence in Jesus' work in their lives?
- 





COMMUNE



Hebrews 10:24–25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

COMMUNE

We Commune with at least two other Christians, committing to a small community that shares the mission of Jesus. When walking through life with others, it quickly becomes clear that common goals and shared challenges lead to many of our most profound experiences of belonging. When practicing Commune, Christians give of themselves honestly and offer accountability to one another, creating a unique, missional community that's bound together by the Holy Spirit. Throughout history, Christians have brought hope, healing, and peace to their culture and community through a notable commitment to a distinctive, yet attractive, life together (Hebrews 10:24–25). The church worships, prays, shares life, and supports one another through hardships of all kinds (Acts 2:42–47), and the very presence of God is among even the smallest gathering of Christians (Matthew 18:20). We Commune with other followers of Jesus because it's essential to the Christian life and mission — we can't live fully without it.

The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

DAILY RHYTHMS

Challenge

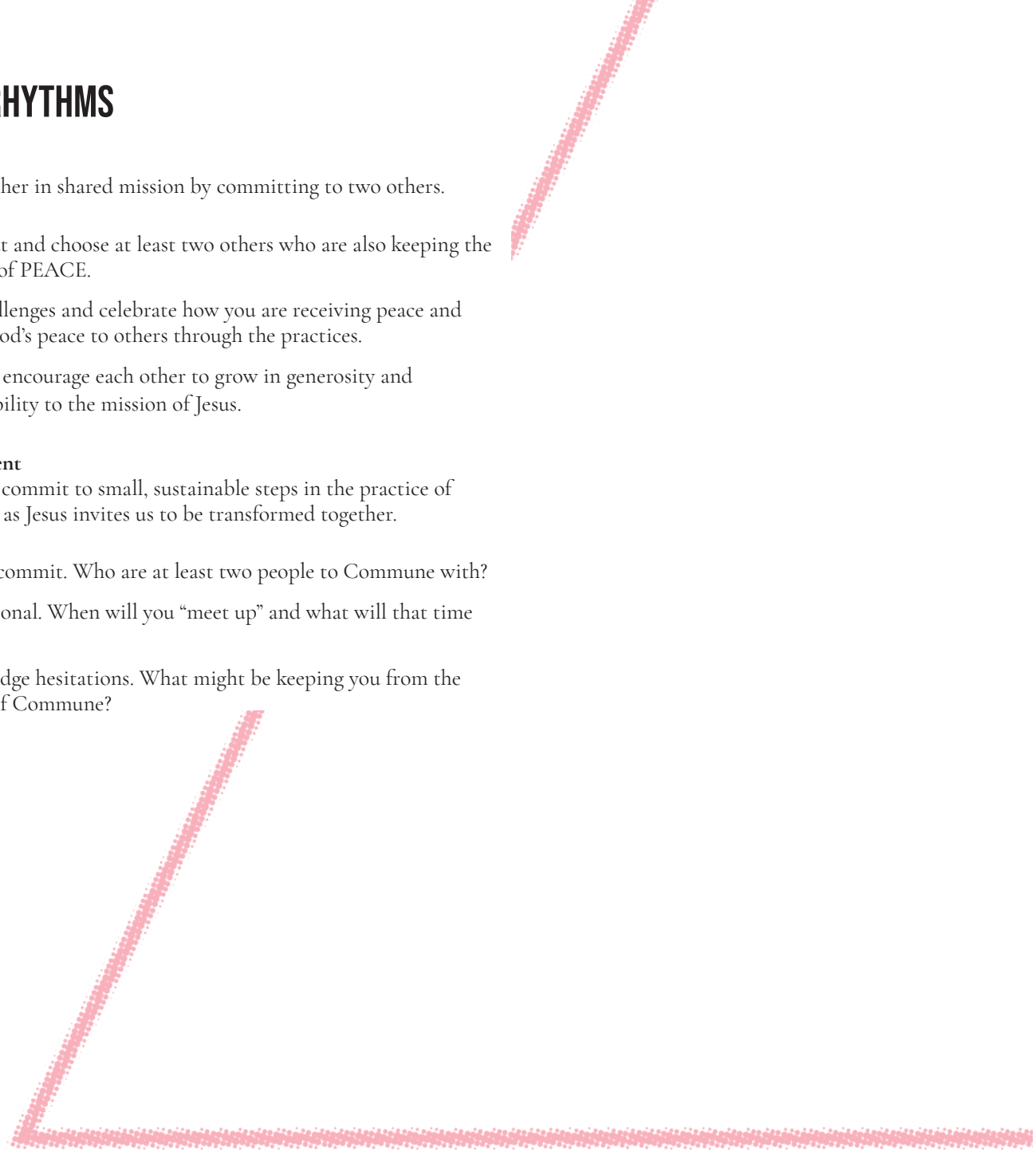
Grow together in shared mission by committing to two others.

- Pray about and choose at least two others who are also keeping the Practices of PEACE.
- Share challenges and celebrate how you are receiving peace and passing God's peace to others through the practices.
- Regularly encourage each other to grow in generosity and accountability to the mission of Jesus.

Commitment

Prayerfully commit to small, sustainable steps in the practice of Commune, as Jesus invites us to be transformed together.

- Pray and commit. Who are at least two people to Commune with?
- Be intentional. When will you "meet up" and what will that time look like?
- Acknowledge hesitations. What might be keeping you from the practice of Commune?



DEFINING MISSION AS YOU COMMUNE

It's an act of faith to invite two others to Commune — together living out the Practices of PEACE authentically. Though you may not have deep spiritual friendships right now, you can begin by inviting two others to join you for this practice.

Use the space below to individually define where God is sending you on mission. Then, when meeting up with your group, use the space on the adjacent page to together define the direction of your group by identifying common goals, shared challenges, and the support you'll need from one another.

Common Goals

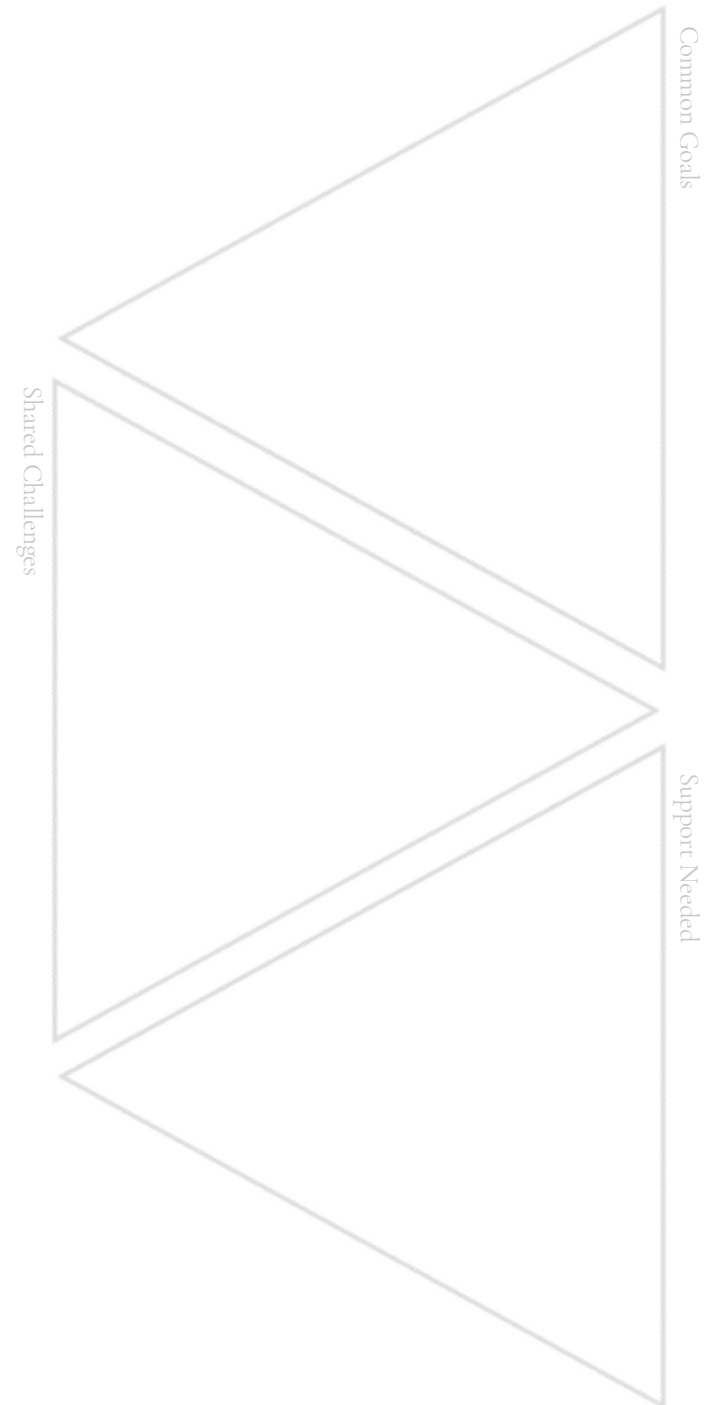
- What are we passionate about? What area is God sending us on mission (relationships, work, neighborhood)?

Shared Challenges

- What are the landmines we need to navigate? What are our besetting weaknesses? Addictions? Fears? Temptations?

Support Needed

- How can we support one another in these common experiences? How can we celebrate and share God's work in our lives together?



PRAYING THE BIBLE AS YOU COMMUNE

It's impossible to Commune apart from God. When we pray God works — in us and through us. Pray that God would form your Commune group, using these Scripture passages to guide your prayer when you meet together.

Italics note any place the wording is slightly edited in order to pray using these passages.

Hebrews 10:24, 25

Lord, help us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as we see the Day approaching.

Colossians 3:1–17

Since *we* have been raised with Christ, *we pray that you* would set our hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. *We pray that you would* set our minds on things above, not on earthly things...*Help us* put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.

We pray we would rid ourselves of anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language; *that we would* not lie to each other, since *we* have taken off *the* old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Therefore, as *your* chosen people, holy and dearly loved, *help us* clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. *Help us* bear with each other and forgive *whatever* grievances *we may have*, *forgiving* as the Lord forgave *us*. And over all these virtues *help us* put on love, which binds *us* all together in perfect unity.

We pray that the peace of Christ *would* rule in our hearts, since *we* were called to peace, *and that we would* be thankful. *We ask that* the message of Christ *would* dwell among *us* richly as *we* teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to *you* with gratitude in our hearts. And whatever *we* do, whether in word or deed, *may we* do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Ephesians 3: 14–19

Heavenly Father, we pray that out of *your* glorious riches *you* may strengthen *us* with power through *your* Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. And *we* pray that *our* [*family, friendship, community group, church*], being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that *we* may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4

Father, help us to live a life worthy of the calling *we* have received. *May we* be completely humble and gentle and patient, bearing with one another in love. *Help us* keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Lord Jesus, help us speak the truth in love, in order to grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From *you* the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Holy Spirit, teach us in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus, with regard to our former way of life, to put off our old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of our minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Help us put off falsehood and speak truthfully to our neighbor, for *we* are all members of one body. In our anger, *may we* not sin: *help us* not let the sun go down while still angry, so *we* do not give the devil a foothold.

Lord, get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice *in us, and make us* kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave *us*.

COMMUNE IN SCRIPTURE

Scripture reveals authentic pictures of Commune, showing its beauty and challenges. Discuss with your group what God might specifically be revealing about Commune through each of these relationships. Discover together new ways you can trust God to use your Commune for his purposes and your good.

[1] Commune as Covenant Friendship

Jonathan & David
1 Samuel 18:1–5

[2] Commune as Counterculture

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael & Azariah
Daniel 1

[3] Commune as Restorative Justice

Paul, Philemon & Onesimus
Philemon 1:8–16

[4] Commune as Radical Commitment

Ruth & Naomi
Ruth 1

[5] Commune as Devotion

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Salome & Mary,
mother of James
Luke 23:55–24:11

[6] Commune as Mission

Paul, Barnabas, John Mark, Silas & Timothy
Acts 15:36–16:5

[7] Commune as the Nature of God

The Trinity
Genesis 1:1–2, John 1:1–18

In light of these pictures of Commune in the Bible, consider what God might want your Commune to look like.





INTERMISSION

Don't forget that Commune is a gift — so go enjoy it! Meet up for a picnic in Central Park. Play some games. Bike along the Hudson together. Share a pot of tea. Visit the Met. Laugh with one another. Enjoy!

COMMUNE TO BLESS OTHERS

Throughout history, Christians have brought hope, healing and peace to society through commitment to a distinctive, yet attractive, life together (Hebrews 10:24–25). The church worships, prays, shares life, and supports one another through hardships of all kinds (Acts 2:42–47), and the very presence of God dwells among even the smallest gathering of Christians (Matthew 18:20). We Commune with other followers of Jesus, because it's essential to the Christian life and mission—we can't live fully without it.

Thousands of years ago, God made a covenant (or a relational agreement) with Abraham. More than a contract, God made a covenant promise with Abraham, in which he promised to use Abraham's obedience as a blessing for the entire world. This blessing encompassed more than material prosperity; it involved restorative justice, flourishing for all peoples, love of neighbor, and communion with God. Abram's later lineage, the Israelites, were supposed to be the "great nation" that would bless others and encourage others to live this life of love. While they failed to do so, Jesus Christ became the ultimate example of faithfulness to God. Jesus called disciples to himself so that they could bless others and, through them, the entire world. Now, Christ's followers are given this same task to Commune so that they and others around them may experience this blessing.

Genesis 12:1–3

1 The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

*2 "I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.*

*3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."*

1. What sort of promise was God making to Abram? What was he being called to give up and what would be the fruit of that?
2. Jesus gave up the privileges of being God and chose to Commune with fishermen and others far removed from the halls of power or nobility. He modeled perfectly what it means to love others in actual, concrete ways. How does this encourage you to commit to others deeply so that you can be part of loving, healthy, restorative change around you?
3. Looking at the challenge below, who are you going to commit to in shared mission?

A large grid of small red dots forming a writing area on page 99. The grid is approximately 20 columns wide and 30 rows high, providing a structured space for handwritten responses to the questions on the adjacent page.

COMMUNE TO ATTRACT OTHERS TO GOD

Throughout history, Christians have brought hope. Because the biblical story shows us that God is forming a new kind of community, we Commune to attract others to God. In Deuteronomy 4, Moses exhorts the people of Israel to live in such a way that the other nations take notice. Their community life, as well as their life with God, are to be so countercultural that others are attracted to it. This is a theme that continues throughout the Scriptures and appears notably when Jesus calls his disciples to love one another in such a way that the world notices it. Practicing Commune creates the space where we can actually embody this rich kind of community where we love each other, walk together with God, and lead lives that attract curiosity from our neighbors.

Read the challenge again:

Challenge: Grow together in shared mission by committing to two others.

- Pray about and choose at least two others who are also keeping the Practices of PEACE.
- Share challenges and celebrate how you are receiving peace and passing God's peace to others through the practices.
- Regularly encourage each other to grow in generosity and accountability to the mission of Jesus.

Deuteronomy 4:5–8

5 See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. 6 Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." 7 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? 8 And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

John 13:35

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.



1. How would you characterize the church? How does Deuteronomy 4:5-8 change or reinforce your view?
2. Looking at both the Deuteronomy and John passages, what is it that catches the attention of others? How do you think outsiders perceive the people of God today?
3. How have your Commune groups been going? What has been difficult? What's worked?
4. Have you chosen people to Commune with yet? Why or why not?

A large graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of a grid of small red dots. The dots are arranged in a triangular pattern, with the top vertex pointing upwards and the base at the bottom. The grid is composed of approximately 20 columns and 20 rows of dots, with the number of dots per row decreasing from left to right to form the triangular shape.

COMMUNE TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE LIVING GOD

The selected scriptures show how God calls his people to be witnesses. That is, he calls his people to testify to something they have seen or heard. When you bear witness, you are telling the story of a particular truth or meaningful event and living in light of it. Thus, for Christians, God calls us to be witnesses to the earth-shattering event of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Our lives together as Christians are to point away from ourselves and to serve as signposts of a greater reality.

The Isaiah passage here depicts an international courtroom where the God of Israel is up against the gods of the nations. Witnesses for both sides are called, and the God of Israel chooses a surprising group from all over the world to be his witnesses—including "those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf" (v. 8)—to testify in the trial. As usual, God is calling people we wouldn't expect to bear witness to his work in the world!

To be a faithful witness to Christ, then, is less about how great God's people are and more about how great God is. Sometimes "witnessing" has been used to mean converting people to Christianity. But "bearing witness" is to say, "Look at him!" This is confirmed in the Acts passage, where the apostles say they are testifying that God has done something drastically new—he has raised Jesus from the dead.

Relating this to the practice of Commune, the challenge is to join with at least two others in sharing the mission of Jesus, serving as a community that points others to the work of God in the world. How will you together bear witness to what God has done?

Isaiah 43:8–13

8 *Lead out those who have eyes but are blind,
who have ears but are deaf.*
9 *All the nations gather together
and the peoples assemble.
Which of their gods foretold this
and proclaimed to us the former things?
Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right,
so that others may hear and say, "It is true."*
10 *"You are my witnesses," declares the Lord,
"and my servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed,
nor will there be one after me.*
11 *I, even I, am the Lord,
and apart from me there is no savior.
12 I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—
I, and not some foreign god among you.
You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "that I am God.
13 Yes, and from ancient days I am he.
No one can deliver out of my hand.
When I act, who can reverse it?"*

Acts 3:15

*You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead.
We are witnesses of this.*



1. What event(s) were God's people in Isaiah's time called to bear witness to?
2. Witnesses in court have to be credible. Thinking about Isaiah 43:8 again, what makes Christians credible witnesses?
3. How has the practice of Commune changed your view of what it means to bear witness to Christ?
4. How can you move your witnessing from converting people to saying "Look at Jesus"? What might that look like in your daily life?



If the church is going to know more of the God for whom it thirsts, it has to learn from the “prodigal ministry” of those who don’t necessarily look or feel like they belong there. The fellowship must include both elder brothers and prodigals—and even those who have no memory of the Father’s house but who have simply wandered in because they finally started paying attention to their thirsty souls. If the church is going to be accessible to these thirsty souls, it dare not define itself by its boundaries. At times it might even seem unclear where the church stops and the world around it starts. Still, this confusion is no threat to the integrity of a church held together, not by its boundaries, but by its center—Jesus Christ. As long as we remain clear about this center, we can handle a good deal of ambiguity and diversity at the fuzzy boundaries.

None of us can be confident that we belong in the church. In reality, all of us are strangers to God’s righteousness, strangers being drawn by the Spirit of God closer and closer into the center of the church, who is Jesus Christ our Lord.

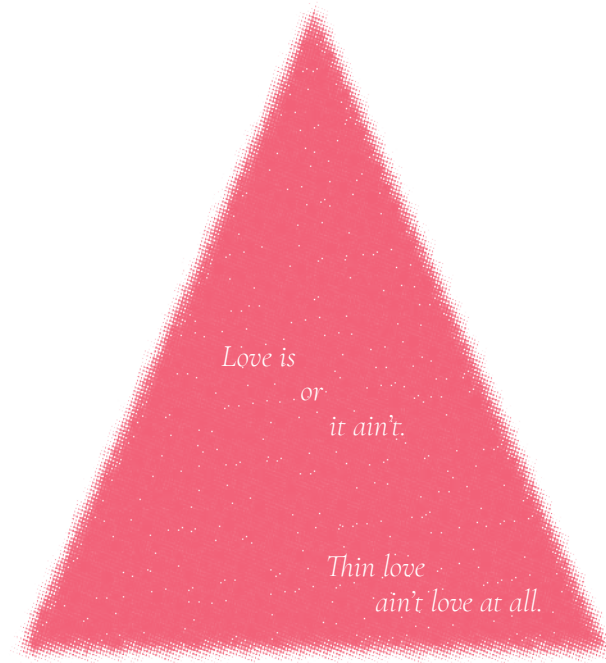
This vision of the church makes room for people who look and act differently from each other but who are tired of being on the run as a result of their thirst for God. There is room in the church for the homeless who are just looking for a place to lie down, as well as for the powerful who want a place where they don’t have to be in charge. There is room for the sinner who is looking for a place to tell the truth, as well as for the perfectionist who can never do enough. There is room for everyone who can make room for other strangers.

— M. Craig Barnes, *Sacred Thirst*

While the practice of Commune has a uniting purpose, relationships can be messy. How does this reading impact your practice of Commune? How does it influence the relationships you’ve been praying for during the practices of Eat and Ask?

Hebrews 10:24–25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.



— Toni Morrison, *Beloved*



EXAMINE

John 15:5

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

EXAMINE

We invite Jesus to Examine us daily through prayer and the reading of God's word. God gives us the gifts of prayer and scripture, not as methods of earning his favor but as avenues to grow in our understanding of love and grace. St. Augustine prayed, "Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know you, and desire nothing save only you." Similarly, the psalmist asks, "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psalm 139:23–24), and Jesus declares that apart from him, we can do nothing (John 15:5). Christian worship throughout history has maintained these themes in various forms, inviting the Holy Spirit to change our hearts and redirect our desires toward God. Through the daily practice of Examine we listen to Jesus through his word and speak to him in prayer, always remembering that he lovingly accepts all who come to him in faith (Romans 4:5).

Several times during the day, but especially in the morning and evening, ask yourself for a moment if you have your soul in your hands or if some passion or fit of anxiety has robbed you of it... If you have gone astray, quietly bring your soul back to the presence of God, subjecting all your affections and desires to the obedience and direction of His Divine Will.

— Frances de Sales

DAILY RHYTHMS

Challenge

Deepen your relationship with Jesus and experience rootedness in the gospel by turning off distractions and tuning into scripture and prayer.

- Read scripture and pray daily. *see pages 120–125 for inspiration*
- Pray the Examen at night. *see pages 128–129 to learn more*
- Keep the guidebook or a journal to help you track your growth in this area.

Commitment

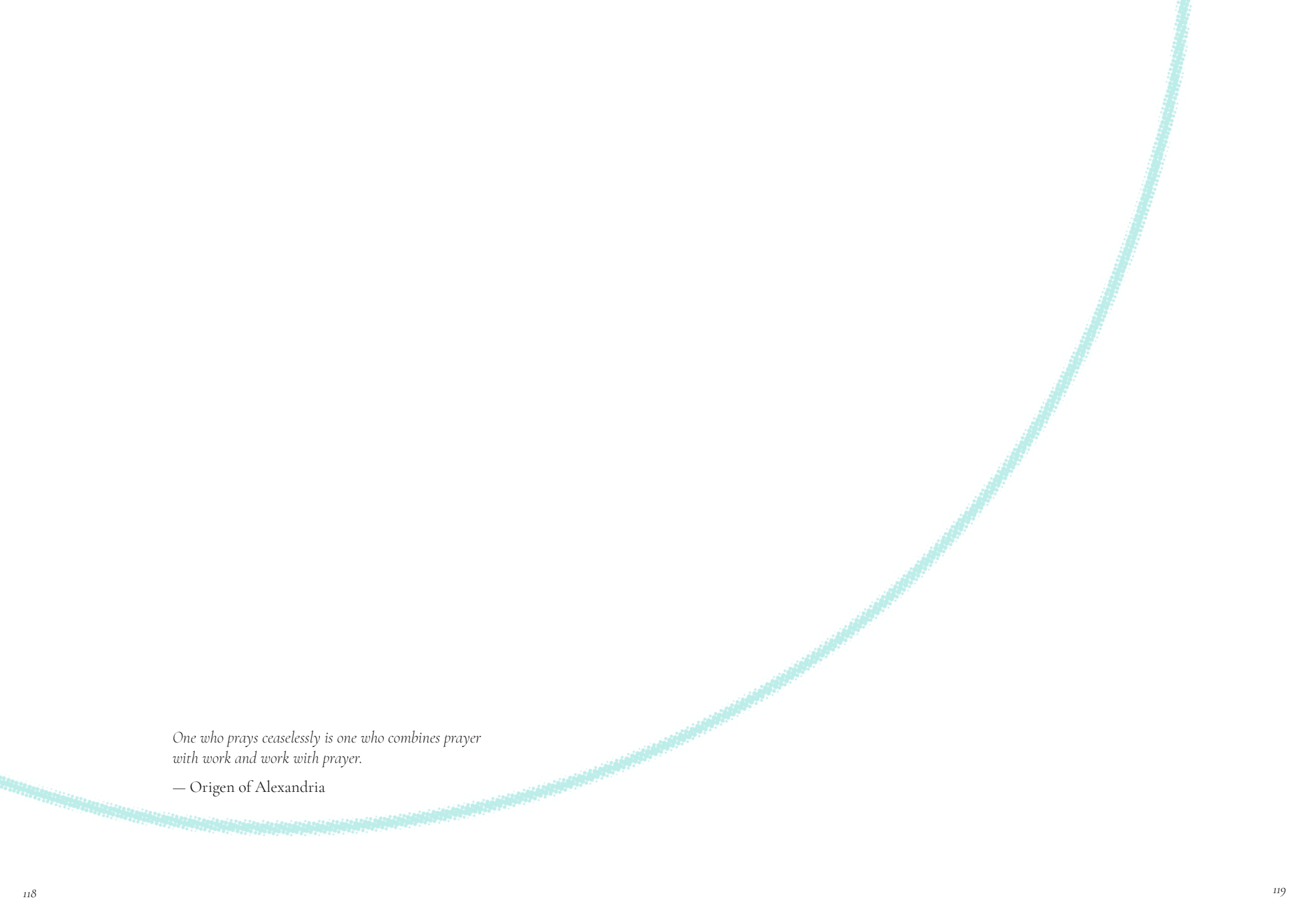
Prayerfully commit to small, sustainable steps in the practice of Examen, as Jesus invites us to be transformed together.

- Establish a sustainable practice. How will you make scripture reading and prayer a daily rhythm? Consider when, where, and what you will do.
- Limit distractions. What do you need to remove or limit, to make time for Examen?
- Tell someone. How can you share what you receive from scripture and prayer with others?



My unexamined daily habit [of checking the cell phone] was shaping me into a worshiper of glowing screens...whether we examine our daily activities theologically or not, they shape our view of God and ourselves.

— Tish Harrison Warren, *Liturgy of the Ordinary*



*One who prays ceaselessly is one who combines prayer
with work and work with prayer.*

— Origen of Alexandria

FRAMEWORKS FOR READING THE BIBLE

We often need tools to get us started when we learn a new hobby or skill, and Bible reading isn't too different. There are two simple frameworks below to help you get started with reading the Bible as you make space for Jesus to examine you. Before using either of them, pray that the Holy Spirit would open your eyes to notice wondrous things from the passage (Psalm 119:18).

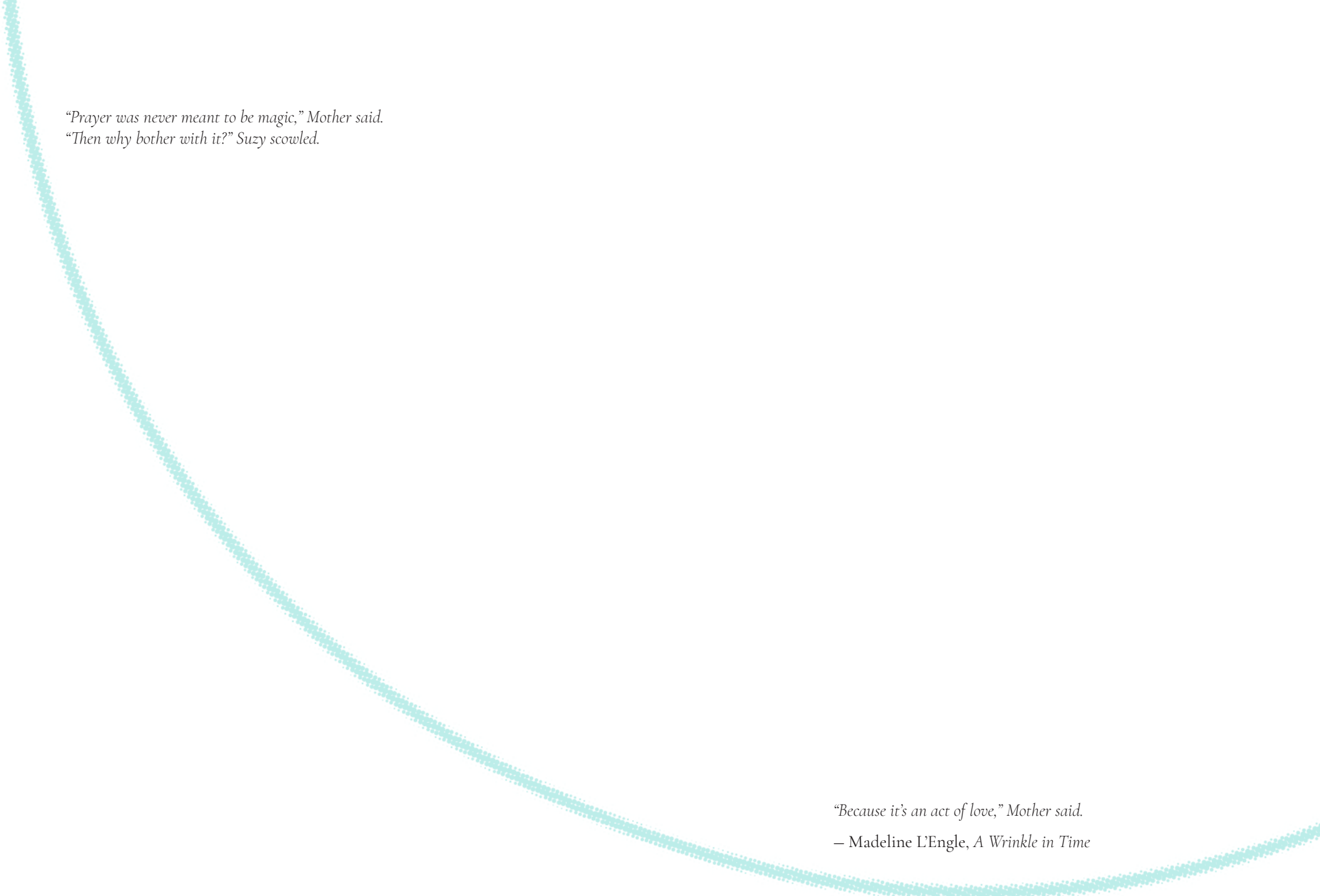
The Swedish Method

1. Read the passage aloud.
2. Ask a few questions:
 - What draws your attention or strikes you about the passage?
 - What's hard to understand about the passage?
 - What applies personally to your life?
3. Pray in response to the passage.

If you're new to the practice of daily Bible reading, try reading one chapter from the Gospel of Mark each day for 16 days using this method. You can also try using a Bible reading plan — there are tons of options out there, bible.com/reading-plans is a good place to start.

The COMA Method

1. Read the passage aloud.
2. Ask **COMA** questions.
 - Ask questions about **context**.
The genre? (poetry, letter, narrative etc.)
Historical circumstances?
What's happened so far in the reading?
 - Make some **observations**.
The main point?
Key words or repeated ideas?
Anything surprising?
 - Ask questions about **meaning**.
How does this text fit with the rest of the book?
How does it point to Jesus?
Summarize it in your own words.
 - Ask questions about **application**.
Does this challenge or confirm my understanding?
An attitude that needs to change?
A different way I should live?
3. Pray in response to the passage.



*“Prayer was never meant to be magic,” Mother said.
“Then why bother with it?” Suzy scowled.*

*“Because it’s an act of love,” Mother said.
– Madeline L’Engle, A Wrinkle in Time*

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO PRAYER

Many of us hope for more in our prayer life. Some of us wonder if we can ever have the fellowship and power that Jesus promises. Prayer is coming to a loving father in our daily circumstances, telling him everything, and listening to him. Overcoming barriers in prayer is possible because we stand on the firm ground that God hears us, delights in us, and will give us grace and access to the Holy Spirit when we seek him (Zephaniah 3:17, Matthew 7:7–8).

Circle one or two of the most applicable statements under each barrier. Write more about them from your own experience.

Distraction: “Be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.” 1 Peter 4:7b

- Do I live a fast paced life with no time for quiet reflection?
- Do I let my perfectionism, control, fear, or any other idol take over?
- Am I going through a season of loss, grieving the loss of a person, job, or dream?

Unrepentant Sin: “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” Ps 66:18

- Am I intentionally justifying sin in my heart or behavior, refusing to turn from it?
- Where are my words and actions misaligned, especially in my private life?
- Am I deeply angry or hurt over something or someone that I can’t “get over?”

Burdens and Doubts: “Father, I believe; help my unbelief!” Mark 9:24

- Am I currently feeling overly responsible for someone or something, doubting that anyone else cares as much as I do?
- Do I tend to be a fixer or doer? Do I try to resolve prayers through my own ideas or actions?
- Am I having difficulty seeing how God could possibly bring good out of this situation?

Selfish Motivations: “Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory.” Ps 115:1a

- Is my identity wrapped up in my reputation? Am I susceptible to seeking others’ approval?
- Am I using prayer to further my agenda or point of view?
- Is what I am praying for consistent with the character of God and the spiritual benefit of myself and others?

Others: You may also experience the barriers of tiredness or depletion, escapist behaviors, spiritual dryness or anger with God. Identifying these barriers can go a long way, as can simply bringing them before our loving Savior.

Use this prayer to guide your confession to God, knowing that he meets you with forgiveness through Jesus.

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a burden of guilt and shame. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed and healed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Does God have a set way of prayer, a way that He expects each of us to follow? I doubt it. I believe some people — lots of people — pray through the witness of their lives, through the work they do, the friendships they have, the love they offer people and receive from people. Since when are words the only acceptable form of prayer?

— Dorothy Day

PRAYING THE EXAMEN

Sometimes we divorce our world from God's presence. The Examen was a form of prayer developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), founder of the Jesuit Order, to help Christians become more aware of Christ's presence daily. The goal of this adapted Prayer of Examen is to better understand our emotional life in the light of grace. Emotions are an important part of what it means to be created in God's image as seen throughout Scripture. Though we may feel emotions all the time, often they are over- or under-expressed, leading us away from God's truth and grace. By becoming more aware of our emotional lives, we know ourselves better, experience grace, and see how God is active and present in our lives.

Directions

The Prayer of Examen was originally practiced twice a day—once at noon and at the end of the day. Most people will not be able to do this two times a day, so start by praying this either at the start or end of the day.

02 min • Opening prayer of invitation: becoming aware of God's presence.

- Sit comfortably in stillness for these minutes.
- Be reminded that our God brings structure out of the chaos of our days.
- Invite the Holy Spirit who searches our hearts to guide you through this prayer.

03 min • Reviewing the day's events.

- Remembering that each day is a gift from the Lord, review your day.
- Does any particular event, meeting, conversation, or place stand out to you? In the rush of our days, it is easy to overlook so much. Think about the things you ate, saw, smelled, and heard. Remember that God is even in these details.

03 min • Considering your emotions.

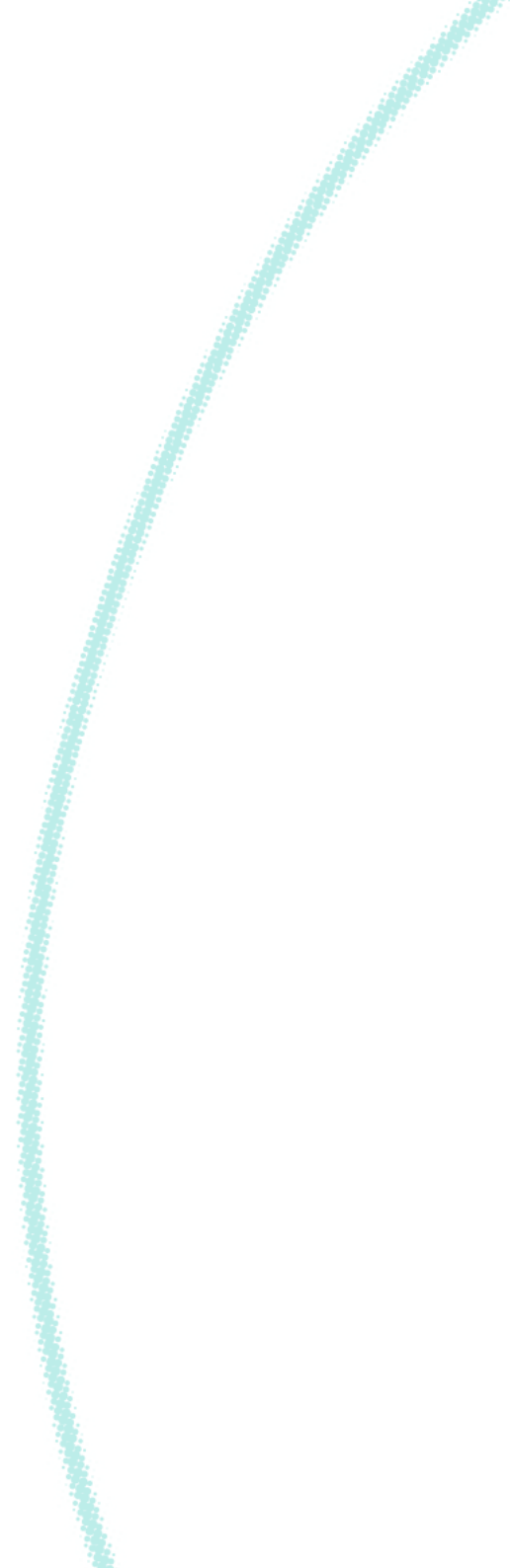
- Our emotions are an important expression of the desires in our hearts; however, we can become unaware of our emotions given the frantic pace of our lives. When we are not aware of our emotions and the desires that underlie them, our idols can gain strength and power in our lives.
- Reflect on the day's events and list the feelings that you experienced throughout the day—fear, anxiety, boredom, happiness, resentment, elation, hope, anger, compassion, etc.

05 min • Praying over one feature of the day.

- As you examine the events and emotions of the day, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to something that God wants you to pay a bit more attention to. This can be something unexpected or seemingly insignificant at first glance. It can be something positive or negative.
- Pray about this particular thing. How would God want you to pray for this? What could God be wanting you to know or learn? How could he be affirming you or leading you to change?
- Remember that the gospel is at work in this issue.

02 min • Closing prayer: looking towards tomorrow.

- Remember that God patiently leads us each day. Today's mistakes are redeemable and today's victories do not guarantee success tomorrow. How might you be able to apply what you've learned today into tomorrow?
- How can you celebrate God and the triumph of His grace?
- What action can you take tomorrow as an expression of faith and dependence upon God's abounding grace?
- Ask that you would be more aware of God's guiding presence tomorrow.



Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc.

Somebody is talking. Who is talking? Your self is talking to you. Now [the psalmist's] treatment was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: "Self, listen for a moment, I will speak to you."...

The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: "Why art thou cast down"— what business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself: "Hope thou in God"— instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do.

Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: "I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God."

— Martin Lloyd-Jones on Psalm 42

QUIET PLACES IN THE CITY

As you take time to practice Examine this month, try visiting one of these quiet, special spaces around our wonderful city in order to read, pray and rest. As this list mostly centers around the East Side, pray for the neighborhood when you visit.

Ford Foundation Atrium

Tudor City ◦ *43rd St, between Second & Tudor City Pl*

With a tropical garden planted in a 12-story glass atrium, the building offers a chance to recharge.

Greenacre Park

Turtle Bay ◦ *51st St, between Second & Third*

Tucked between two buildings on an ordinary Midtown block sits Greenacre Park, a pocket of serenity and urban solitude.

Park Avenue Plaza

Midtown ◦ *52nd, between Park & Madison*

Huge indoor waterfalls provide a soothing background for visitors, running all the way through mid-block.

6 1/2 Avenue

Theater District ◦ *Between Sixth & Seventh*

A series of mid-block crosswalks from 51st Street to 57th Street, connecting arcades within the dense buildings of Midtown.

The IBM Plaza

Midtown ◦ *57th & Madison*

There are birds flying around you and great art not only inside the atrium but also in the entrance lobby.

Albertine

Upper East Side ◦ *79th & Fifth*

Located at the back of the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, it's not exactly a likely place for a bookstore, but with a beautiful, well-lit space and a broad selection, it won't disappoint.

Harlem Meer

Central Park ◦ *Southwest of 110th & Fifth*

Picturesque lake surrounded by a gently-sloping landscape and walking paths.

Wave Hill Public Garden & Cultural Center

Riverdale ◦ *4900 Independence Ave*

Expansive, manicured public garden with wooded paths, benches, and Hudson River views.

Elevated Acre

Financial District ◦ *55 Water St*

Park space with a lawn, boardwalk & seasonal beer garden atop a building amid downtown skyscrapers.

LECTIO DIVINA

God gives us the gifts of prayer and Scripture, not as methods of earning his favor but as avenues to grow in our understanding of love and grace. St. Augustine prayed, “Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know you, and desire nothing save only you.” Similarly, the psalmist asks, “Search me, O God, and know my heart” (Psalm 139:23–24), and Jesus declares that apart from him we can do nothing (John 15:5). Christian worship throughout history has maintained these themes in various forms, inviting the Holy Spirit to change our hearts and redirect our desires toward God. Through the daily practice of Examine we listen to Jesus through his Word and speak to him in prayer, always remembering that he lovingly accepts all who come to him in faith (Romans 4:5).

Participants should now take turns reading the following Scripture aloud slowly, while the rest of the group meditates on and responds to each reading. This method reminds us that we can worship God by slowing down to listen and receive from him.

Instructions

- After the first reading, quietly meditate on one word or phrase that stands out.
- After the second reading, each participant answers silently, “What does this word or phrase mean to my life today?”
- After the third reading, participants pray silently, asking God, “What are you saying to me through this word or phrase?”
- After the fourth and final reading, participants silently offer words of worship and praise to God in light of what he has given them today.

1. Have each person choose the 2 or 3 most important insights from the lectio divina and discuss together. Encourage each person to take notes about their own insights:
 - Adoration: How does this lead me to adore and praise God?
 - Confession: How does this lead me to confess or repent to God?
 - Thanksgiving: How can I thank Jesus for being the ultimate answer to this sin? (How is this sin linked to an inordinate desire for something to provide what only Jesus can truly provide?)
 - Supplication: What does this lead me to petition God for?
 - Why might God be showing me this today?
2. Give a moment of silence to reflect.
3. Sharing things in the context of community groups is a space for us to know Jesus more deeply, leading us to love God and our neighbors more.
 - What is God showing you about your everyday life through this time of Scripture reading, meditation, and prayer?
4. Spend time praying according to your meditation and discussion. Give time for adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication.
 - Pray for each other.
 - Pray for those people with whom you’ve been practicing Eat & Ask.

Psalm 139:1–12

1 You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.

2 You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

3 You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

4 Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.

5 You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

7 Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
10 even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.



John 15:1-11

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.



Romans 4:1–16

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about — but not before God. 3 What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

4 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5 However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 “Blessed are those
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the one
whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

9 Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. 10 Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11 And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12 And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, 15 because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

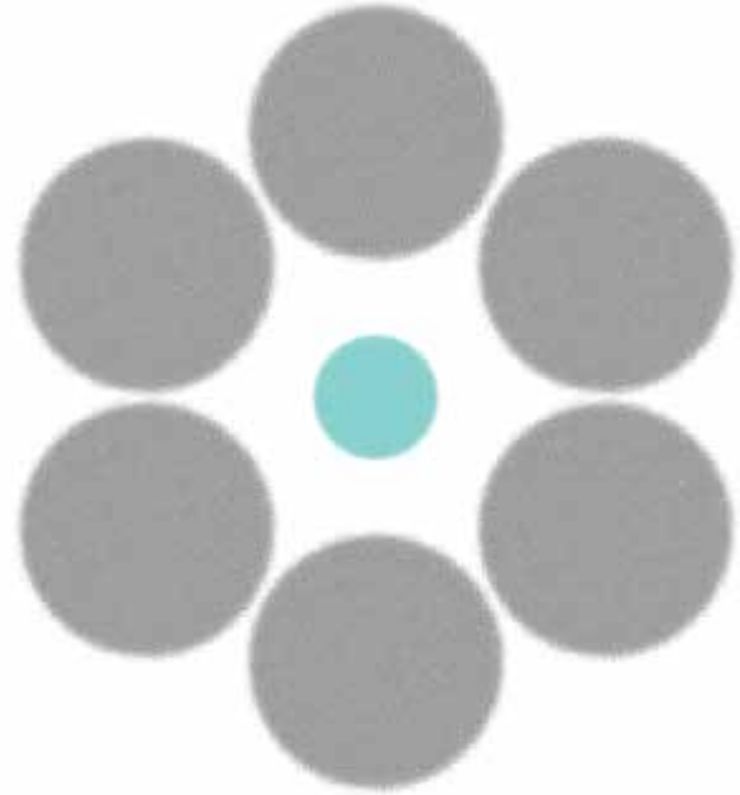
16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance.

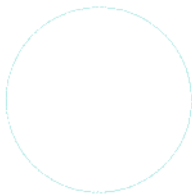
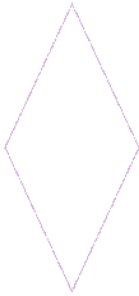
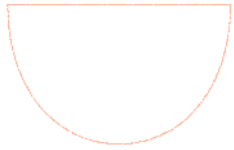
It is laying hold of His willingness. — Julian of Norwich

John 15:5
“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

which mint circle is larger?



Neither — both are equally sized, but our eyes trick us. Only when measuring the circles against a standard can we see the truth clearly. Such is the way of our lives: it's all too easy to view ourselves by our surroundings, rather than calibrating ourselves to who we are in Christ.



APPENDICES

A PRAYER LOG FOR PEACE

We can't experience peace without Jesus. It's absolutely essential that we invite God into our engagement with the Practices of PEACE, and we do this through prayer. Spend a month folding the Practices of PEACE into your life, and use this space to take notes about how it goes week by week, allowing these notes to prompt you toward prayer. Don't worry if everything doesn't go perfectly, this is simply meant to help you deepen your engagement with these practices.

	How did you Pause?	With whom did you Eat?	What did you Ask?	How did Commune spur you on?	What did God reveal to you through Examine?
Week 1					
Week 2					
Week 3					
Week 4					



RULE OF LIFE FOR PEACE

Christians throughout history have developed and committed to a Rule of Life: a set of rhythms and practices that guide, or *rule*, one's day to day life. This may feel uncomfortably restrictive, but a Rule of Life is not meant to be suffocating — on the contrary, it's meant to be freeing, as it helps someone declutter their ordinary busyness and clarify the way they truly want to live. Use the space below to develop the ways you'll incorporate the Practices of PEACE into your daily, weekly, monthly, and annual rhythms. Not every space needs to be filled — this should be aspirational but also doable and tailored to you. Be as specific or as vague as you'd like, and never let this become a barrier or source of shame — this is only meant to be helpful as you seek to deepen your relationship with Jesus.

PAUSE

EAT

ASK

COMMUNE

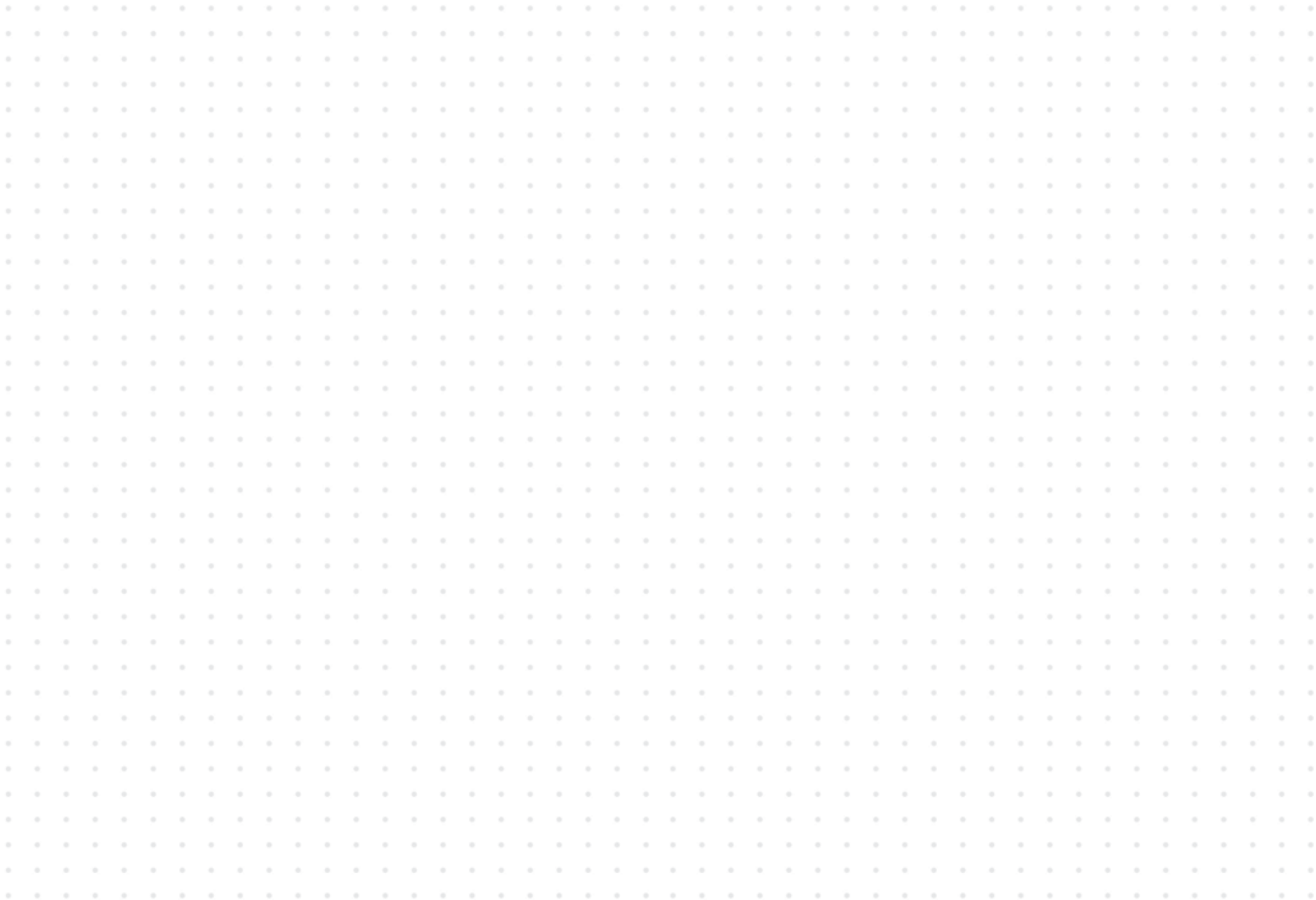
EXAMINE

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Seasonally/Annually



Here are four resource cards meant to be cut out, folded and shared with someone in need in NYC. Consider making or buying a meal for an unhoused neighbor, praying with them, and giving one of these resource cards. Check out hfnyc.org/resources to print more.

On the following page are some prayer notes. Cut one out, write a short prayer for someone, and share it with them as a little gift of encouragement.

PLACES TO GO FOR HELP

ALL ANGELS' CHURCH
 251 West 80th St, west of Broadway **212-362-9300**

SHELTER INTAKE: Sun 3PM
MEALS: Tues & Thurs 11:30AM;
 Sun 6:30PM (5PM worship service required)

SOCIAL SERVICES: Tues & Thurs 9AM-2PM
SHOWERS: Tues & Thurs 8-9:30AM (WOMEN); 9:30AM-2PM (MEN)

ST. PAUL'S HOUSE
 335 W 51st Street, between 8th & 9th Ave **212-265-5433**

MEALS: Mon, Wed, Fri 7:15-9AM
 PANTRY: Tues 10-11AM
 YOUTH GROUP: Fri 5-9PM

NYC RELIEF
 Provides meals, socks, hygiene kits & resources **800-736-2773**

WED: 28th St, between 9th & 10th Ave (Chelsea) 10AM-2PM
THURS: The Bowery Mission, 90 Lafayette Street (Tribeca) 10AM-2PM
FRI: The Salvation Army, 132 W. 14th St (Union Square) 10AM-2PM
 125th St & Park Ave (Harlem) 10AM-2PM
SAT: 148th St & Brook Ave (Bronx) 10AM-2PM
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HFNY.ORG

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THE BOWERY MISSION (Bowery campus)

227 Bowery, one block south of E Houston **212-674-3456**
MEALS: Daily 8AM, 1PM, 6PM
CLOTHING & SHOWERS (MEN): Tues & Fri 8AM registration;
9AM distribution
MEDICAL: Wed 6PM
OPTICAL: Every other Tues 8:30AM



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Amen.

Amen.

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90 Lafayette St, two blocks south of Canal **212-226-6214**
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CLOTHING: Tues 11AM-1PM (REFERRALS ONLY: WOMEN);
Thurs 10AM-2PM (MEN AND WOMEN)
SHELTER INTAKE: Daily 3PM (WOMEN) 4PM (MEN)
SNAP & MEDICAID: Tues 3-5PM
AA: Sun 7PM



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THE SALVATION ARMY

Provides basic needs like food, homeless shelters & pastoral care **212-337-7328**
HARLEM: 540 Lenox Ave, between 137th & 138th St
EAST HARLEM: 145 East 125th St, off of Lexington
DOWNTOWN: 132 West 14th Street, between 6th & 7th Ave



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Amen.

Amen.

Fold here

A prayer for

_____ with much love from

Fold here

A prayer for

_____ with much love from

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A prayer for

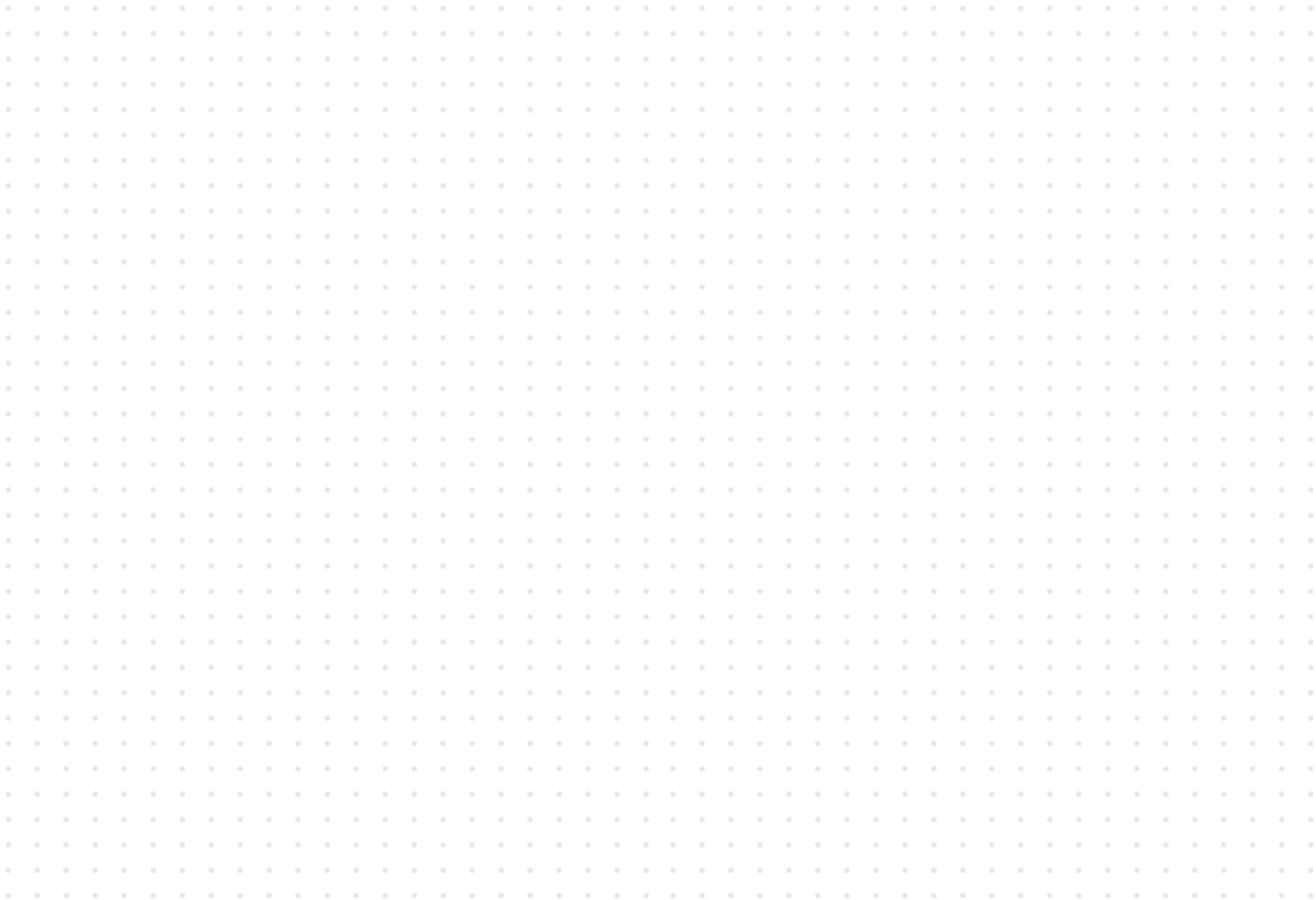
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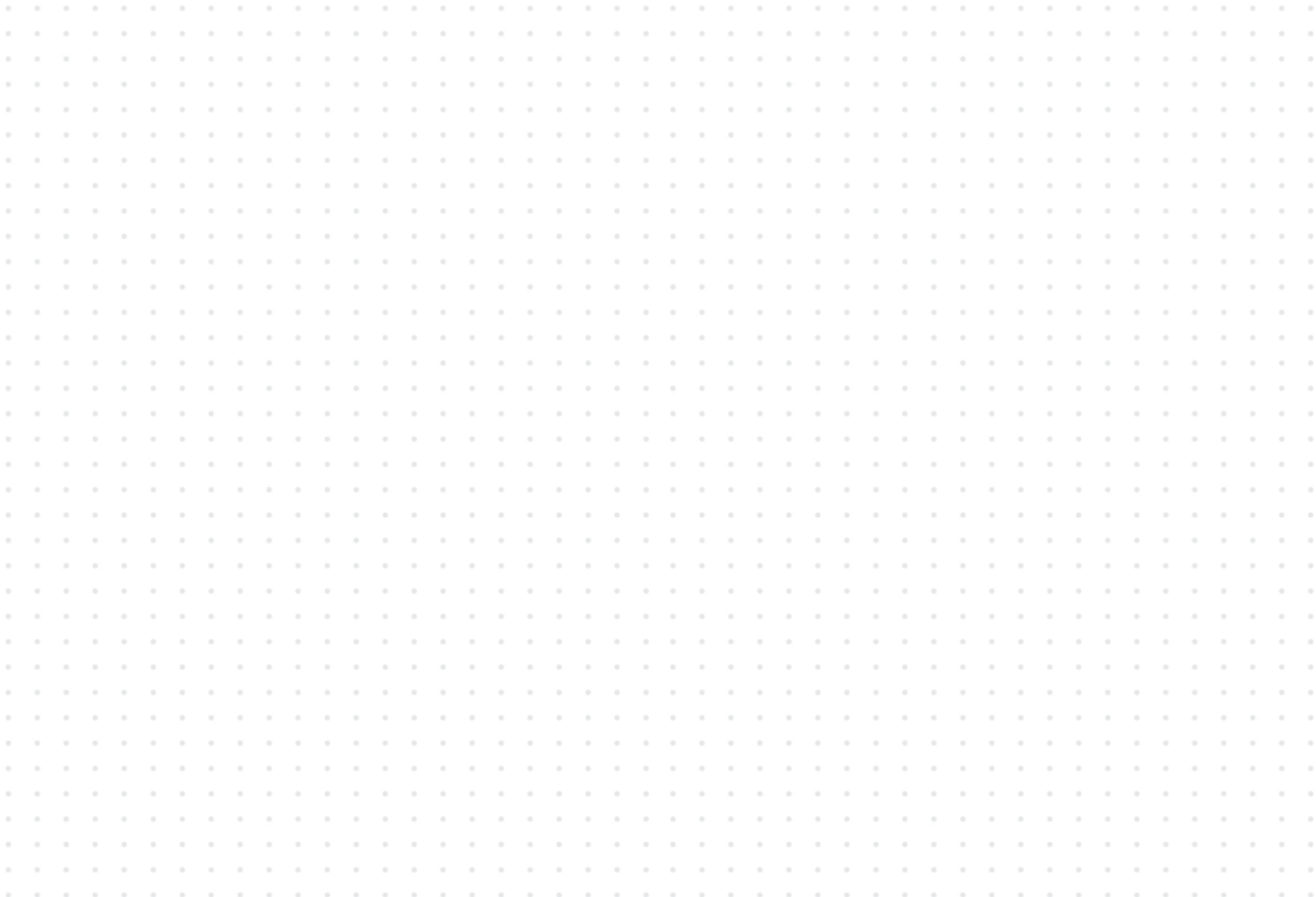
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A prayer for

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A NOTE FROM THE DESIGNER

Designing these guidebooks has been an honor and a joy that I cannot entirely articulate. I only have my gratitude; to those that hired me to create this body of work, to those that encouraged and challenged me along the way, to God our Father for instilling in us the passion and ability to make this vision a reality, and to those who used these books. It is my hope that you have been affected in any way by the beauty sought in these pages on behalf of their creators.

Thank you, Katie Hodge.

About the Type

The headers throughout this book have been set in the sans serif typeface, Bebas Neue. Designed by Ryoichi Tsunekawa, It was originally released in 2010 as a revised version of Bebas, in a single all-caps style with a Latin character set. Made available under the SIL Open Font License.

The body copy throughout this book has been set in the serif typeface, Cormorant Garamond. Cormorant is an open-source serif family designed by Christian Thalmann. The design was inspired by the sixteenth century types of Claude Garamond, however, in contrast to typical Garamond-inspired text faces, Cormorant was designed as a display face. The family is available in five distinct versions, this book utilizes Cormorant Garamond, a variation of the typeface that features larger counters which makes it more suitable as a text face.

About the logo

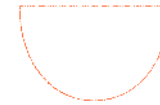
The Practices of PEACE logo exemplifies the harmony of living these practices out in our lives. Individually, each practice has its own visual symbol, but together they become a unified image of life dedicated to peace. The colors associated with each practice have been applied to textured circles that sit together as a five-part venn diagram of sorts, with PEACE in all capital letters as the acronym of Pause, Eat, Ask, Commune, and Examine.



About the Practices and their Shapes



Pause, a practice regarding sabbath rest, called to mind the pause symbol seen on remote controls. By pairing it down to a single pillar, a sense of stability and visual stillness is evoked from the solid shape, mirroring the effect sabbath rest has on the whole of our lives.



Eat, a practice of hospitality, is framed through the act of inviting others together around a meal. This semicircular shape resembles a bowl, one that could literally fill up with food, or spiritually fill up our lives through radical giving and receiving.



Ask, a practice of asking with curiosity and compassion, encourages us to lean into one another's stories and bear the burdens of those around us as Jesus did. This diamond images this as if two points are reaching toward one another, able to bounce around in a continual dialogue that becomes an enriching conversation.



Commune, a practice of committing to one another in faith, reflects the community perfected within the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Such unity is conveyed through the equilateral triangle. This shape of three equal sides bound together creates something stronger than the sum of its parts.



Examine, a practice of creating rhythms of prayer and time in scripture, is an essential piece in moving towards spiritual wholeness. The idea of reaching wholeness evokes the endless perfection of a circle. We will not reach perfection on this side of glory, but God our Father in His loving-kindness fills this space for us.

PRACTICES OF

PEACE

Go in peace.



PAUSE

One day each week we Pause from our labors so that we can delight in Jesus. Matthew 11:28–30



EAT

In the practice of Eat, we reflect God's hospitality through eating or time spent with two others. Mark 2:16–17



ASK

We practice Ask once per week, taking a curious and compassionate posture to others. Genesis 3:9



COMMUNE

We commit to Commune in a small community of at least two other Christians to share in the mission of Jesus. Hebrews 10:24–25



EXAMINE

We invite Jesus to Examine us daily through Scripture reading and prayer. John 15:5

