

The Praying Disciple

Experiencing Peace through Fellowship with God



The **FOURTH** in a Series of **6** Small Group Studies



MDPC

Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church





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Appendix



- 1 Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 Introduce every group member** (15 minutes).

Go around the group and have every member answer the following questions aloud:

- What is your name?
- What is your connection to MDPC or to another Christian fellowship?
- What in the past seven days has been really good news for you?

(Please note each member's time should be brief. If 10 members speak for five minutes, you will have taken 50 minutes to introduce yourselves!)

- 3 Read aloud about *The Equipped Disciple Series*, *The Praying Disciple Course*, and *Group Expectations*** (10 minutes).

The Equipped Disciple is a multi-course small group curriculum developed at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church. Each course lasts six sessions, with each session approximately 60-70 minutes. (To take up to 90 minutes, simply extend the group's participation in one or more areas of the session's lesson plan as desired.)

There are six 6-session courses designed for *The Equipped Disciple*, including this course you are starting now.

- *The Growing Disciple*
- *The Witnessing Disciple*
- *The Studying Disciple*
- *The Giving Disciple*
- *The Praying Disciple*
- *The Serving Disciple*

Another multi-course series of small group curriculum, *The Maturing Disciple*, is scheduled to launch in 2022-23.

This course, *The Praying Disciple*, has the sub-title *Experiencing Peace through Fellowship with God*. Each session will focus on one specific aspect of prayer that will enable you, with the Holy Spirit's help, to be a faithful practitioner of prayer. As you pray faithfully in each circumstance, you will experience God's peace.

Most sessions will include study and discussion on a biblical passage relevant to the spiritual practice of prayer. Also, each session will include opportunities to grow in your other spiritual practices, such as devotional reading and Scripture memory. Directions for those leading a group are found in the session materials themselves, not in a separate leader's guide.

So your group will be a fruitful and joyful experience, each member will strive to embrace the following:

- Commit to attend consistently.
- Contribute to a group climate of mutual trust, respect, honesty, and vulnerability.
- Discuss willingly. This is not a lecture. Your input is vital!
- Prepare in advance for the upcoming group session, barring unexpected events. (If such events occur, come to the session anyway.)
- Write in this guide. (But remember, this is not a writing class. Brief notes may suffice.)

- Bring your Bible every time. Ordinarily, biblical passages won't be printed in the guide.
- Anticipate that the Holy Spirit will do something in you during this time of focus.

4 Prepare and discuss as a group Matthew 6:7-15 and Philippians 4:6-7 (30 minutes).

Read Matthew 6:7-15 and Philippians 4:6-7 in a Bible translation of your choice, then respond to the questions below. When you meet as a group, read Matthew 6:7-15 and Philippians 4:6-7 aloud. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss with one another.

Matthew 6:7-8 states that we do not need to “heap up empty phrases” (ESV) in our prayers because the Father knows what we need before we ask. If this is true, then why do we need to pray at all? Discuss.

Many call Matthew 6:9-13 a model prayer for us. As you review the Lord’s Prayer as a whole, what characteristics of prayer do you see reflected in it that you need to include when you pray?

In Philippians 4:6, Paul states that anxiety is to be avoided. Why? What does your anxiety reveal about what you think about God? About your own faith and practice? How does prayer help you?

According to Philippians 4:6, for what specific circumstances or needs may you present your prayers to God? How does this freedom provide you with great opportunity for prayer?

In Philippians 4:7, what best describes the result of faithfully applying the guidance on prayer in verse 6? How this result differ from how the world describes it? Share at least one time you have experienced this result as you have prayed.

Philippians 4:7 mentions both heart and mind. Why do you think this distinction is important to note? Why do our hearts need this assistance? Why are our minds in need of such support?

5 Read aloud about devotional Bible reading and responding (5 minutes).

We just finished a Bible study. Another encounter with Scripture that growing disciples need to practice often is reading the Bible devotionally. The consistent devotional reading of Scripture is an important way to experience the continuing presence and guidance of Jesus Christ.

For our 6-week course, we will read Philippians together as our group's devotional reading. (Note: if you are already a consistent reader of the Bible, well done! For the group's time together, though, please either add Philippians to your present reading or substitute Philippians for your reading plan.)

We will divide this meaningful letter from Paul to the Christians in Philippi in this way:

- Before Session 2, read Philippians 1:1-11.
- Before Session 3, read Philippians 1:12-30.
- Before Session 4, read Philippians 2:1-30.
- Before Session 5, read Philippians 3:1-21.
- Before Session 6, read Philippians 4:1-23.

You have great flexibility in how you schedule the passages from Philippians. For example, you may:

- Read a few verses each day.
- Read the first half of the assignment one day and the second half another day.
- Read the entire assignment at once.

Please do not read mechanically. Reflect upon what you read as you read, and prayerfully discern God's guidance for you. In your study guide's appendix, you will find Reading Response Forms to help you answer two questions of each reading from Philippians:

- "In what I read from Philippians, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?"
- "What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?"

Please write your responses in the space allotted. In the remaining group sessions, you'll have the opportunity to share how God has been working through your devotional reading time.

6 Read aloud this introduction to Scripture memorization (5 minutes).

I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You. (Psalm 119:11, ESV)

Memorizing anything, especially Bible verses, gets little respect in our day. With the availability of search engines and smart phones, why bother? All you have to do is Google what you want, and there it is! However, Psalm 119:11 insists that storing God's word within our hearts (in other words, memorizing Scripture) can be an effective means of enabling and strengthening faithful Christian living. It is true Scripture memory will take some effort and determination. But it is well worth it.

Our memory verses for this course are Philippians 4:6-7. These verses neatly and effectively sum up the importance of prayer for growing disciples. We'll memorize them from the NIV so we can help one another more easily with a shared translation:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,

present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV).

Some helpful hints for memorizing are:

- Write out the verses in longhand. Something about writing imprints the words on your memory. For some, repeated writing in longhand is quite helpful.
- Write the verses on a 3" x 5" card. Carry the card with you and refer to the verses often.
- Say the verses aloud as you practice. Speaking also imprints the words on your memory.
- Break up the verses into their smaller phrase units. Start with the first phrase and work on it until you are comfortable. Then add the second phrase. Continue to add phrases as you learn the verses phrase by phrase.
- Reflect on the verses' meaning. Connect the verses with their significance for your life.
- Do not forget to include the Scriptural reference and translation at the end, such as "Philippians 4:6-7, NIV". (Studies have shown it can be helpful to know where to find the verses you memorize in the Bible.)
- Practice often and review regularly. "Overlearning" is often what's needed to break through.

Starting at your next gathering, you will practice your verses with others by dividing the group into pairs. You will want to work on your verses in advance in order to take advantage of this opportunity.

7 Talk about what's needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- Please prepare the Bible study found in "Session 2: Praise" and be ready to share.
- Read Philippians 1:1-11 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Start memorizing Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) and be prepared to practice with a partner at the next session.

8 Close in prayer.

- 1 **Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 **Greet and “check in” with group members** (5 minutes).
- 3 **Share from your personal Reading Response Form for Philippians 1:1-11 and discuss** (10 minutes).
- 4 **Read, study, and discuss as a group Matthew 6:9-10 and Psalm 96:1-13** (35 minutes).

Read Matthew 6:9-10 and Psalm 96:1-13 in a translation of your choice, then reflect upon your responses to the following questions and prompts. Feel free to write down comments, thoughts, and notes in the spaces below. When you meet as a group, read aloud Matthew 6:9-10 and Psalm 96:1-13. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss your answers with one another.

What is important or noteworthy in Matthew 6:9 about the name by which we are to address Almighty God? What does it say about your relationship with God? About God’s relationship with you?

Matthew 6:9 says, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name” (NIV). What does it mean to “hallow” something or someone? We live in a time in which God’s name is not often hallowed. How does the cultural moment in which we find ourselves affect your praise of Him? How may your prayer life be counter-cultural?

Describe the movement or plot within Psalm 96:1-13. How does the prayer start? Where does it go after the introduction? Where does it move next? How does it conclude? How does this movement or plot assist you as you consider how to praise God in your prayers?

Psalm 96:4-6 answers the question, “Why should we praise God?” What serves as motivation for praise in these verses? What motivates you to praise Him? How may your prayers reflect this motivation?

Several translations of Psalm 96:7-8, such as the New Revised Standard Version, New International Version, and English Standard Version, repeat the seldom-used verb “ascribe” three times. What does this word mean? What does its repetition tell us? How can we put this concept into practice as we pray?

Psalm 96:10 makes a statement about God that sets up the praises in Psalm 96:11-13. What does Psalm 96:10 say? Why is this belief about God essential to prayers of praise? How may it enable and enhance your praise?

Prayers of praise are often performed quickly so we can get to the really important matters of prayer. Why is this practice harmful to a well-rounded prayer life? How can you reflect a better balance between praise and the other elements of prayer as you pray?

5 Divide into pairs or triads (groups of three) and practice saying the memory verse without notes (10 minutes).

(NOTE: If you are meeting via Zoom, your host will need to set up the “breakout room” feature.) No doubt you have made progress on memorizing Philippians 4:6-7. Wonderful! If you are struggling, remember God is with you as you memorize these verses. Go as far as you’re able. You will have an opportunity next time to continue your work.

6 Talk about what is needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- Please read the Bible study for “Session 3: Confession” and be ready to share.
- Read Philippians 1:12-30 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Continue your work on memorizing Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) and be prepared to practice with a partner at the next session.
- *NEW: In your homework before Session 6, you will be asked to spend at least one hour in an extended time of individual prayer. You will be given several possible methods to employ, and more information will be given as it draws closer. FOR NOW, please look in your calendar and block out a day and time for this endeavor.*

7 Close the gathering in prayer.

- 1 **Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 **Greet and “check in” with group members** (5 minutes).
- 3 **Share from your personal Reading Response Form for Philippians 1:12-30 and discuss** (10 minutes).
- 4 **Read, study, and discuss as a group Matthew 6:12,14-15 and Psalm 51:1-19** (35 minutes).

Read Matthew 6:12,14-15 and Psalm 51:1-19 in a translation of your choice, then reflect upon your responses to the following questions and prompts. Feel free to write down comments, thoughts, and notes in the spaces below. When you meet as a group, read aloud Matthew 6:12,14-15 and Psalm 51:1-19. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss your answers with one another.

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines confession as “the act of admitting that you have done something wrong or illegal.” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/confession>) Why is acknowledging we have done wrong often so hard? What gets in the way of your earnest confession to God?

What word is used by Jesus as a synonym for “sins” in Matthew 6:12? What is significant about this word choice for our understanding of what sin is and how it works in human affairs? How does it help you to see your sin in this way? To see the sin of others in this way?

According to Matthew 6:14-15, what happens if we are unable to forgive others? Why do you think Jesus emphasizes this dynamic relationship between God’s forgiveness and our forgiveness? What does this relationship say about the reality of God’s grace in your life?

The question must be asked: if God knows all things, then why do we need to confess? Presumably God already knows what we have done! So what is the point or purpose of confession? What are the benefits of confession for you?

How does David describe the reality of his sin and his fallenness in Psalm 51:3-5? What jumps out at you about this description? How does this description speak God's truth to you? (NOTE: For background on Psalm 51, review briefly the account of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:1 — 12:23.)

In Psalm 51:9-12, David elaborates on what he truly needs from God. What word, phrase, or statement speaks most evocatively to you here? Why? When you confess your sin to God, what do you most need from Him? How does the gospel address your need?

In Psalm 51:15-17, David states what he believes God truly desires in David's life as he confesses his sin. What two phrases in verse 17 best summarize this? Think about the relationship between confession and repentance: Is confession without repentance truly confession, and if not, why not? How do God's forgiveness and your repentance intersect in your life as you pray?

5 Divide into pairs or triads and practice saying the memory verse without notes (10 minutes).

(NOTE: If you are meeting via Zoom, your host will need to set up the “breakout room” feature.) Have you made progress on memorizing Philippians 4:6-7? If so, great! If not, remember God will give you strength as you memorize these verses. Go as far as you're able. You will have an opportunity next time to continue your work.

6 Talk about what is needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- Please read the Bible study for “Session 4: Petition” and be ready to share.
- Read Philippians 2:1-30 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Continue your work on memorizing Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) and be prepared to practice with a partner at the next session.
- *Have you blocked out space in your schedule for the upcoming 1 hour extended time of prayer? It will happen between Session 5 and Session 6 as your homework for Session 6. More information to come...*

7 Close the gathering in prayer.



- 1 Welcome everyone and open with prayer.
- 2 Greet and “check in” with group members (5 minutes).
- 3 Share from your Personal Response Form for Philippians 2:1-30 and discuss (10 minutes).
- 4 Read, study, and discuss as a group Matthew 6:10-11,13 and Psalm 86:1-17 (35 minutes).

Read Matthew 6:10-11,13 and Psalm 86:1-17 in a Bible translation of your choice, then respond to the questions below. When you meet as a group, read aloud Matthew 6:10-11,13 and Psalm 86:1-17. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss your answers with one another.

List the three distinct petitions Jesus includes in Matthew 6:10-11 and 13. In what ways are they similar? In what ways do they differ? How are each of these three petitions evident in your life?

Are the three specific petitions in the Lord’s Prayer all you may bring before God to hear and to address? If not, why? What other petitions, intercessions, and supplications are you able to bring to God? If you can, please cite at least two additional Scriptures to support your answer.

In what ways are all humans “poor and needy,” as Psalm 86:1 (NIV) states? What particular expressions of poverty and need are present in your life and challenge you right now? How do you need for God to respond to your poverty and need?

What comfort does the Psalmist take from the nature of God as “forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to You” (NIV) in Psalm 86:5? What difference does it make that God has these characteristics as you pray to Him? How does it shape your response to His answers?

The Psalmist is experiencing great challenges and struggles, as he notes in Psalm 86:14. How does he implore God to respond? Why is the Psalmist confident in God hearing and responding to his petitions, based on the verses that follow? Why can you have confidence in God hearing and responding to your requests?

When evil, difficulty, and calamity happen in our lives, we rarely receive an answer to often the first prayer we put to God: “Why?” Talk about why you think this is the case. How do you deal with the ramifications, both positive and negative, of no answer to “Why?” during your walk with Jesus?

Some say that God ultimately answers our prayers of petition in three basic ways: 1) “Yes,” 2) “No,” or 3) “Not Yet.” When have you experienced each of these answers? How did the “Yes” strengthen your faith? How did the “No” challenge your trust? How did the “Not Yet” put your life in a holding pattern? How have you grown in your relationship with God through each type of answer?

5 Divide into pairs or triads and practice saying the memory verse without notes (10 minutes).

(NOTE: If you are meeting via Zoom, your host will need to set up the “breakout room” feature.) If you have memorized Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV), congratulations! If you have not memorized these verses yet, don’t worry! Say what you can. Continue to work on Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV). You will have an opportunity next time to show how far you have come.

6 Talk about what’s needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- *NEW: No Bible study for next time. Instead, read the “Guidelines for Conversational Group Prayer” on pages 13-14. You will spend time in Conversational Group Prayer during your next session, so please be prepared.*
- Read Philippians 3:1-21 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Work on memorizing Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) and be prepared to practice with a partner at the next session.

7 Close the gathering in prayer.



- 1 **Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 **Greet and “check in” with group members** (5 minutes).
- 3 **Share from your Personal Response Form for Philippians 3:1-21 and discuss** (10 minutes).
- 4 **Read aloud and discuss the following “Guidelines for Conversational Group Prayer”** (10 minutes).

The Lord’s Prayer shows us that prayer is more than an individual practice. Given the pronouns used throughout the Lord’s Prayer, it is also a community endeavor. So we will experience together a period of Conversational Group Prayer in a few moments.

Praying together as a small group can be a dynamic and uplifting experience for all. Unfortunately, group prayer can also struggle because of one or more of the following problems that arise:

- One or two voices dominate by praying long, extended prayers.
- If prayer requests are taken, the requests can be longer than the actual prayers.
- Also, prayer requests can degenerate into gossip under the guise of Christian community.
- Prayers can be disconnected and disjointed, so that it is more like individuals praying who just happen to be in the same room, rather than a group’s concerted effort to pray together.
- The pressure to perform can cause some to overuse churchy language or to repeat words or phrases over and over (“Lord, we just want to…”).

Conversational group prayer, on the other hand, is dialogue and communication with God. We talk with God with full acknowledgment others are present, and they are listening and participating. We listen deeply to one another’s prayers, respond to them, and build on the topics introduced so that there are connections made as we pray aloud as a group.

First, here are tips for everyone participating in conversational group prayer:

- Keep each individual prayer short (1-3 sentences, tops) and centered on one thought.
- Use everyday, ordinary language. Now is not the time to impress your peers with your knowledge of church language and theological jargon.
- Listen and pray silently with the one praying aloud instead of deciding what you will pray next.
- Pray spontaneously with no around-the-circle order.
- No one is compelled to pray aloud. But if you do, please pray loud enough so the group can hear.
- You can pray aloud more than once, and on occasion even more than once on the same topic if the Lord leads. But try to allow everyone who wants to pray to do so. Don’t dominate the prayer.
- No one is forced to divulge personal or private information. But if such information is shared in prayer, it must remain confidential. If there is any question or concern, please talk with a pastor.
- Build upon each other’s prayers on the same topic, as you would do in a conversation. This links the topics and prayers together.
- We automatically pray for those with health and personal concerns. This is most proper, but not the only need for which we may pray. What are other Kingdom-related topics? Here are a few that are suggestive but not exhaustive: 1) the advance of God’s grace

through witness and service; 2) friends and family to respond to the gospel; 3) the growth of our church's ministry; 4) the wisdom our leaders need to lead well; 5) persecuted Christians in Iran, China, and other countries; and 6) leaders and times of crisis. These (and many more) topics may serve as marvelous springboards for prayer.

- Be comfortable with the silences that will inevitably occur. Do not rush to fill them. You may continue to pray on the same topic. Often silence is the cue to move to a new topic.
- Do not close each short prayer you pray with "in Jesus' name" or a similar phrase. Your leader will close the entire prayer time with such an ending.
- The three categories we have discussed in our previous studies of the Lord's Prayer — praise, confession, and petition — are a helpful structure or flow for the group to use as it prays together.

Second, here are tips for those leading a group in conversational prayer:

- It is often helpful to present a concern about which to pray, such as the ministry of our church, or the subject discussed in the Bible study just completed, and so on, to give focus to the prayer.
- It is best if you do not solicit specific prayer requests before the conversational group prayer starts. Instead, trust the prayer time to reveal the needs of the group.
- Feel free to transition the group from one broad category of prayer to another, as in praise to confession, especially if there are time frame concerns.
- Begin with a prayer of praise. Conclude with a short closing prayer, as in "Lord, answer our prayers in keeping with Your will, for we offer them in Christ's name. Amen."

5 Pray as a group, using the guidelines and tips mentioned above (25 minutes).

- A brief period of silence to allow the group to "settle in" to this opportunity for prayer.
- Prayers of praise for 5 minutes, with an opening prayer of praise by the group leader.
- Prayers of confession for 5 minutes.
- Prayers of petition for 15 minutes.
- A closing prayer by the group leader.

6 Divide into pairs or triads and practice saying the memory verse without notes (10 minutes).

(NOTE: If you are meeting via Zoom, your host will need to set up the "breakout room" feature.) If you have not memorized these verses yet, do what you're able. Continue to work on Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV). You will have a final opportunity next time to show how far you have come.

7 Talk about what's needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- *NEW: Review the guidelines for your extended time of prayer and spend at least one hour in prayer. Then be ready to share.*
- Read Philippians 4:1-23 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Continue memorizing Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) and be prepared to share it with the group.

8 Close the gathering in prayer.



- 1 Welcome everyone and open with prayer.
- 2 Greet and “check in” with group members (5 minutes).
- 3 Share from your Personal Response Form for Philippians 4:1-23 and discuss (10 minutes).
- 4 Review the guidelines below for an extended time of prayer (5 minutes).
- 5 As a group, debrief your experiences during your extended time of prayer, using the categories below to give structure to the discussion (20 minutes).
 - What went well for you? Why?
 - Where did you struggle? Why?
 - What would you do differently next time? Why? How would you advise others?
- 6 Share your memorization of Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) with the entire group (15 minutes).

Celebrate the successes! Encourage those still working on the verses. If you have not memorized them, do as much as you’re able, and then continue to work on Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV). If there is time, please share with one another what you learned from this process.

- 7 As you close in prayer at the end of this final session, please share at least one benefit you have experienced from participating in *The Praying Disciple*. Give thanks to God for His grace and encouragement (10 minutes).

Guidelines for An Extended Time of Prayer

Yet the news about Him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed (Luke 5:15-16, NIV).

Schedules are jam-packed! You have places to go and people to see! So how can you even think about an extended time of prayer lasting at least one hour and possibly longer? One response is Jesus did it often, as noted in the Gospels. He got away to spend extended time with His Father in prayer.

Yet the thought of praying for an hour or more at one time may be daunting to you. If you have never prayed like this before, here are some initial guidelines for you:

- First, select the best location for you, where you will not be disturbed. Put your phone on silent.
- Second, have a Bible so you may look up passages as you need. Also have a notebook, journal, or notes app on your phone to write down any impressions and concerns that arise.
- Third, prepare with a moment of silence, especially if your day has been a busy one.
- Fourth, launch out and pray! Extended prayer is something you simply learn by doing it more and more.

“Oh, if only it were that easy!” you exclaim. One way to proceed is to use the “praise, confession, and petition” flow we have been discussing. But if a little more structure would be beneficial to you, then below are two possibilities:

- **Option #1: Pray Each Clause of the Lord's Prayer**

Start with *"Our Father who art in heaven"* and thank God for His fatherly care. Then move to *"hallowed by Thy name"* and truly honor God's name through your praise and adoration both for who He is and what He has done for you. (10 minutes)

With *"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"* pray for particular instances in which you long to see God's will being done here on earth. In *"Give us this day our daily bread,"* ask God for His continuing provision for yourself and others, and be specific. (15 minutes)

"Forgive us our debts" provides the occasion for you to confess your sin and to see it as a debt Jesus has paid. *"As we forgive our debtors"* prompts you to pray for those whom you need to forgive and for your ability to forgive as you have been forgiven by God. (15 minutes)

"Lead us not into temptation" leads you to thoughtful prayer about those tests, trials, and temptations that cause heartache and pain, both in your life and in the lives of others.

"Deliver us from evil [or evil one]" joins you in the spiritual battle of Christian living. (15 minutes)

"For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" returns you to prayers of praise. *"Amen"* means "so be it," that your prayers will become reality. (5 minutes)

- **Option #2: Pray with "Lectio Divina" ("Divine Reading")**

Here is a time-honored way of praying through God's Word. Select at least two Scripture passages. Then follow a pattern from MDPC Caring Ministries Pastor Beth Case:

First, Prepare:

Slow down and breathe. Slow down your feet, mind, chatter. Become attentive to your heart and mind. Are you weary, distracted, expectant, worried, joyful, or something else? Know that God is present with you. Ask God, "Please open Your Word to my heart, and my heart to Your Word." Entrust yourself into God's loving care by placing yourself and all your concerns, responsibilities, worries, hopes, joys, and the like into His hands. (10-15 minutes)

Next, Practice:

Read the passage once: Listen for the word that captures your attention. What jumps out at you? What word or phrase draws you, or sparks your curiosity? Your resistance?

Reflect upon the passage: How does it connect to your life? Where do you find yourself in it?

Respond to the passage: Does God have an invitation to me here? How does my heart and mind respond? Am I convicted? Encouraged? At peace? What is my prayer? What do I say to God?

Read the passage again: Note how your reflection and response are changed, enhanced, or altered. What is God saying to me? How may I reply to Him?

Rest in the passage: Be still in the Lord's presence. Trust in His grace. Close with praise. (Repeat this section with the second passage as needed—25-45 minutes per passage.)

Reading Response Forms for Philippians

For Session 2 • Philippians 1:1-11

In what I read from Philippians, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?

For Session 3 • Philippians 1:12-30

In what I read from Philippians, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?

For Session 4 • Philippians 2:1-30

In what I read from Philippians, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?

For Session 5 • Philippians 3:1-21

In what I read from Philippians, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?

For Session 6 • Philippians 4:1-23

In what I read from Philippians, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?



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