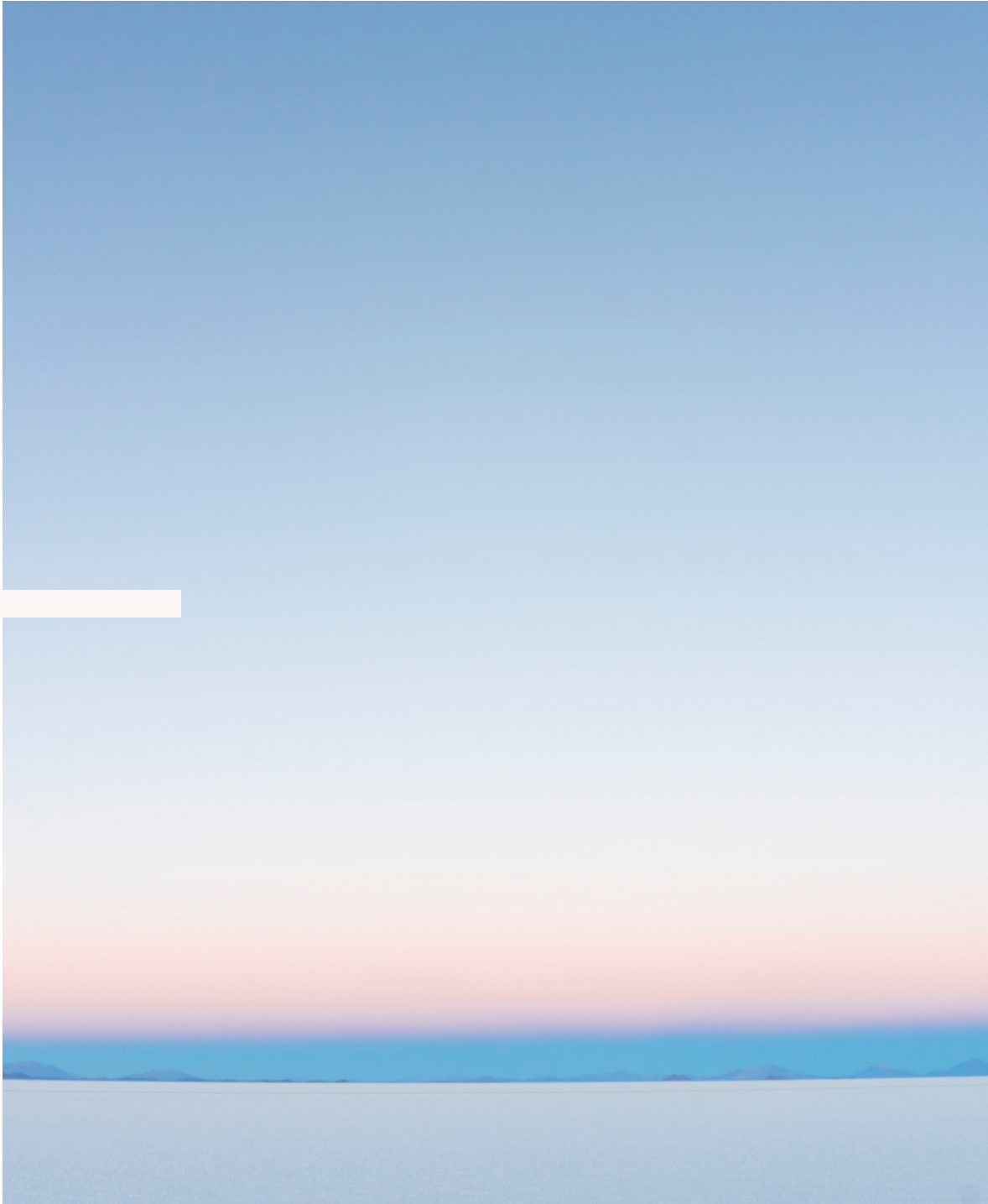


KINGDOM CULTURE



GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

FOLLOW. BECOME. DO.

4

W O R S H I P
&
P R A Y E R



PURPOSE: TO SEEK GOD'S PRESENCE THROUGH WORSHIP AND PRAYER

KEY VERSES | EPHESIANS 6:10-20

W O R S H I P

Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:15-20, Psalms

We were made to worship. Human beings were created to reflect God's glory back to him. Worship is not about us, it's about Jesus. He is the object of our worship, and in worship, we direct our desire and longing toward him. We exalt his name, we praise him, we ascribe him worth, we tell him what he means to us, we give thanks for all he's done in our lives. We give him praise for who he is- his character, his attributes, his beauty, and his actions. In response to God's mercy, we offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God. As we are transformed by his presence, our minds are renewed, enabling us to break with patterns of the world's story, and live in greater awareness of God's Kingdom breaking in around us.

P R A Y E R

Ephesians 6:10-20, Philippians 4:4-9, James 5:13-18, Psalms
One of the best ways to connect with God is through prayer.
Prayer is both communication and communion with God.

Prayer as Conversation

In conversation with God, we can speak to him, he hears us and can respond to what we say. He is not far off or distant. He is deeply concerned with our lives, thoughts, and feelings. He desires to hear from us. We can speak to him, and we can be honest with him about our lives as they really are. In prayer, we can learn to partner with God in what he is doing, and learn to align our heart, mind, and will with his. As we pray, we can impact the world around us, changing the outcome of particular situations. In prayer we can also learn to listen for God's voice. He can speak to us internally through things like impressions, thoughts, or feelings. He can also speak to us externally through things like the Bible, our circumstances, or other people. The best way to learn what God sounds like is by reading the Bible. The Bible is always the measure by which we discern if what we are hearing from God is accurate, because God will always speak and act in ways that are consistent with his character as he is revealed in the Bible.

Prayer as Communion

Prayer is communion with God. It is making space to be with God without an agenda. We can learn to spend time in his presence and learn to live life present to God. As we practice paying attention to the presence of God at specific times and places, we can grow in paying attention to his presence as we go about the normal business of life.

P R A Y E R

WAYS GOD SPEAKS IN THE BIBLE AND TODAY

- **The Bible** | This is the primary way he speaks, and all other ways are subject to scripture (Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21)
- **Audible Voice** | (Matthew 3:17, John 12:28, 1 Samuel 3)
- **Still Small Voice** | (John 10:1-6, 1 Kings 19:11-13)
- **Visions and Dreams** | (Acts 10, Acts 2:17, Matthew 2:13, 19)
- **In Our Inner Person** | (Romans 8:16, Ephesians 3:16-17, Philippians 4:7)
- **Divine Circumstances and Signs** | (Acts 16:6-10, Acts 27, Judges 6:36-40)
- **Other People and Prophecy** | (Matthew 10:19-20, 2 Peter 1:21, Colossians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 14:1, Acts 11:27-28)
- **Other Ways** | such as creation (Psalm 19:1), the arts (Exodus 31:1-6), or any other way he determines (Numbers 22:21-39)

The Book of Psalms: Worship is so central to God's people, that there is an entire book of the Bible dedicated to prayers and songs to God.

THE FIVE TYPES OF PSALMS

- **Praise** | focus on honoring, worshiping, and glorifying God for who he is and what he's done.
- **Wisdom** | teaching and wise advice to help us live a Godly life.
- **Thanksgiving** | praise for specific instances where God has answered prayer, revealed himself, or shown up in the life of an individual or group.
- **Royal** | these psalms honor God's work through earthly kings in Israel's history. They can also honor God as the truest King, and point to Jesus as the coming King.
- **Lament** | psalms that cry out to God in crisis, grief, or desperation. These psalms seek God when his presence is difficult to see, feel, or discern based on present circumstances.

P R A Y I N G T H R O U G H T H E P S A L M S

The psalms can help us grow in prayer and offer models for different types of prayer. Below are four types of prayer we see in the psalms and can practice in our own prayer lives:

- **Adoration:** Focus on thanking, honoring, and glorifying God for who he is. They focus on God's character, attributes, and nature.
- **Confession:** Focus on sin we have committed, whether knowingly or unknowingly, and repenting for sin, grieving its effects, and receiving forgiveness from God.
- **Thanksgiving:** Focus on expressing gratitude for specific ways God has blessed you or intervened in your life, your community, or the world.
- **Supplication:** Focus on asking God for certain outcomes in specific situations in our life, the lives of others, or things happening around the world.

Take a moment to reflect on your experience with worship and prayer. Where have you experienced a connection with God? Where have you experienced challenges or difficulty? What is one thing you can do to grow in prayer or worship?

4

P R A C T I C E



PRACTICE

Learning to follow Jesus takes practice. This week's practice will help us to grow in worship and prayer by participating in a time of worship at home or in our monthly prayer and worship night at Grace Bible. The night typically has three elements:

Worship

We seek to worship God. One of the ways we do this is by singing songs to God together. People are welcome to express their worship with their bodies through things like raising hands, bowing down, or even dancing. Through worship we seek to give God glory, to encounter his presence, and to be reminded of who he is.

Prayer Ministry

Often when we spend time in God's presence, he begins to reveal places in our own lives or the lives of people in our community that he wants to minister to. We seek to make space for the church to encourage one another through prayer. This typically happens through inviting people forward for prayer ministry as we worship and seek God together.

Intercession

As we seek God's face, we receive his heart for our church and for the world. For this reason, we want to cry out to him on behalf of our church, our cities, and the world.

DAILY TIME WITH JESUS

Day One | Acts 1

*watch video on Acts 1-7

Day Two | Acts 2

Day Three | Acts 3-4

Day Four | Sabbath

Day Five | Acts 5

Day Six | Acts 6

Day Seven | Acts 7

R

SPIRITUAL
DISCIPLINES



PURPOSE: TO PARTNER
WITH GOD'S WORK IN US
TO BECOME MORE LIKE
JESUS

KEY VERSES | MARK 6:31

THE NEED FOR COUNTER FORMATION

Mark 6:31 and 6:46, Matthew 4:1-11 We are constantly being formed and shaped by the world around us. Whether or not we are paying attention, our desires are influenced by the cultural liturgies we participate in. And the liturgies of the culture- the rhythms and practices we engage in daily, weekly, and monthly- are forming and shaping our desires. To become a people who are truly subversive, who are living in the reality of God's kingdom amid the present age, we must seek space to be intentionally formed and shaped by Jesus. We can do this through rhythms and practices called Spiritual Disciplines, modeled after the rhythms and patterns of Jesus' life.

How are you being formed? Is our culture shaping you or are you shaping our culture?

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Mark 9:28-29, Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Psalm 37:7

Why Practice Spiritual Disciplines?

Following Jesus takes intentionality. What begins as a discipline, over time becomes a habit. What becomes a habit, can eventually become a natural response. Over time, disciplines help us to do what Jesus did without thinking about it. They rewire us for life in the Spirit, helping us to bypass our old way of life and participate in our new life in Christ.

What are Spiritual Disciplines?

Spiritual Disciplines are intentional practices that help us to lean in to the grace we have received from Jesus. Through disciplines we become present to God, embracing our identity in him, and recalibrating ourselves to his presence, his will, and his Kingdom. Over time, disciplines help us to live, act, and respond more like Jesus. These disciplines are never an end in themselves but a means to an end, which is transformation by the work of the Spirit to be more like Jesus. Throughout the scriptures, Jesus models for us a healthy, balanced rhythm of life. He models rhythms of engaging and withdrawing, of being and doing, and of activity and retreat.

- **Disciplines of Abstinence** are all about space clearing, self-emptying, self-limitation and self-denial for the purpose of creating space for God's presence. They often remind us of our dependence on God, his provision, and his Lordship in our lives.
- **Disciplines of Engagement** are how we fill the emptied space. These disciplines help us to become like Jesus through our doing. We seek to think, speak, and act in a way that is consistent with our identity in Christ. They are ways of learning to participate in what God wants to do in us, through us, and around us.

Disciplines of Abstinence

- Silence
- Solitude
- Fasting
- Sabbath
- Simplicity
- Frugality
- Retreat
- Life Rule
- Confession
- Submission

Disciplines of Engagement

- Bible
- Reading
- Prayer
- Worship
- Community
- Hospitality
- Service
- Celebration
- Meditation

There are some disciplines, that we call Baseline Disciplines – reading the word, prayer, community and silence and solitude. These are disciplines that Jesus practiced regularly and are normal to life with Jesus. We encourage you to regularly implement these into your life, as they are significant in the journey to become like Jesus and do what he does.

Silence and Solitude

In silence and solitude, the condition of our hearts and the ways we are enslaved to the world around us are often revealed to us by the work of the Spirit. These are often identified through distractions that arise in the silence or identifying the mind's resting place – the place the mind is drawn to when it is not being pulled one way or another intentionally. In identifying these external distractions and the internal chaos, we are able to enter into God's grace, and get to a place where it is God who is doing the shaping and molding of our hearts and minds. Disciplines of silence and solitude help us to slow down. They help us to attend to what is most important within us and become attuned to the Holy Spirit, who is at work within us, transforming us. In this space we focus on our being rather than to doing, learning to live and act out of our true self as a beloved child of God.

R

P R A C T I C E



SILENCE & SOLITUDE

Learning to follow Jesus takes practice. To do this, we will take time to practice Silence and Solitude. The next hour is all about making space to be with God. On the following pages are a few exercises to try. Don't try them all right now! Choose one to use as a guide for your time. The rest will serve as resources for your next foray into silence and solitude. Don't worry about completing the exercise or getting "right" answers. Simply make space to be present to God, and present to what's happening in your inner-life.

One more thing: put away your phone. Turn it off, put it on silent, or leave it at your table. This single act may be one of the most life-giving parts of the next hour. Take a deep breath, surrender your hopes and expectations to him, and enjoy the space.

AM I LISTENING?

This exercise is primarily a practice of asking questions of God and waiting on his response. If you've never practiced listening to God's voice and what he has to say about a particular issue in your life or question you may have, we recommend using this as a guide for your time.

Step One

Read and meditate on one of the following Scripture passages:

- Psalm 139:13-18
- Ephesians 1:17-19
- Ephesians 3:14-19

After reading the text, write down some questions you would like to ask the Lord about himself, or about you. Then, set down your pen.

Step Two

Now, invite the Lord into conversation with you. If it's helpful, imagine you're in the Garden of Eden, as Adam and Eve were, and God enters—this time looking for YOU. He calls you by name, "Where are you?" This time, the answer is "Here I am!" Respond to his invitation to you warmly and enthusiastically.

Step Three

Then do what the Scriptures refer to as "inquiring of the Lord." Ask him your questions. Listen for his response through the Holy Spirit. He may prompt your thoughts with a Scripture, a word, a picture, or a gentle impression in your spirit.

Step Four

Write down what you receive. When first learning, don't wait for an audible voice; his voice is often internal. It can sound just like a thought deposited in your mind. Therefore, don't dismiss something as "just my thoughts." Instead, write it down. Relax. In this step, just record what you are hearing. If you don't feel you've heard anything, don't be discouraged. After all, this is intended as an opportunity to learn.

Step Five

Now you can test what you've received. Consider what you've written down according to these criteria:

- Is what you received in agreement with Scripture and God's character?
- Does it point you to Christ and a Holy Spirit-filled life?
- Is it consistent with how God has formed and gifted you?
- Does it encourage, edify, strengthen, and/or convict you, versus disheartening, diminishing, and/or condemning you?

Step Six

Close your prayer time with a prayer of gratitude and praise to the Lord for creating you with the capacity for connection with him. Affirm your love for him, and receive his love for you.

WHAT VOICES DO I LISTEN TO?

This exercise is a practice of identifying the various voices that get in the way of hearing God's voice in your life.

Step One

Read and meditate on one of the following Scripture passages:

- Genesis 3:1-5
- 1 Kings 11:13
- Matthew 4:1-11

After reading the passage, write down some questions you would like to ask the Lord about himself, or about you. Set down your pen.

Step Two

Now, invite the Lord into conversation with you. Ask him to show you what other voices you might be listening to.

- What voices are you listening to?
- From the past, the present, the future?
- Voices of the media, work colleagues, friends?
- Which voices speak the loudest?
- What is it they're saying to you?
- Are they saying good things or bad?

Write down what you receive.

Step Three

Reflect on how these voices affect your ability to hear God's voice. How do you respond to them? What patterns, rhythms, habits or behaviors come as a response to these voices? Write down what you receive then listen for His response.

Step Four

Psalm 46:10 says "Be still, and know that I am God." Listen for his response through the Holy Spirit. Ask God to speak to you about these other voices. He may prompt your thoughts with a Scripture, a word, a picture, or a gentle impression in your spirit.

Step Five

Close your prayer time with a prayer of gratitude and praise to the Lord for creating you with the capacity for connection with him. Affirm your love for him, and receive his love for you.

LECTIO DIVINA

One way of slowing down is by prayerfully reading the Bible using a method called Lectio Divina, which is Latin for 'Divine Reading', reading with the heart, or reading prayerfully. Lectio Divina is an ancient way of praying practiced by Christians. It is the technique of a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures which enables the Bible to become a means of union with God.

Step One

Choose one of the following passages:

- 1 Kings 19:10-18 [The LORD Appears to Elijah]
- John 4:1-26 [Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman]
- Psalm 1
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 139

Spend a few minutes settling down and pray that you may be open and receptive to the gift God knows you need today. Only the Holy Spirit can bring the Word to life. Allow your own breathing to become more deep-seated as you invite the Spirit to pray in you afresh.

Step Two

Begin reading at the place you have previously chosen, and read very slowly indeed with an open mind. Don't study the text, just read it slowly, aloud if you find that helpful. This is the "lectio," or reading. When a particular sentence or phrase or single word "lights up" or "rings a bell," seems striking or inviting, put the Bible down. Resist the temptation to go on, and do not start thinking up reasons why the phrase has attracted your attention. Here the reading stops and the "meditatio" begins, the absorption through repetition. Suppose you are reading John 10 where Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd. As you come to verse 14 you are struck by, "I know my own, and my own know me." This is the verse you now meditate with.

Step Three

Gently repeat the phrase or word again and again within the heart. Let the repetition be gentle and not mechanical. There is no need to imagine anything or try to feel anything. The repetition is to allow you to feed on the words at an intuitive level. After a time, you may find that a sentence has shortened itself to one word. In the above example it may be "know". In time you may become aware of a general impression that the words have made on you. In this case it could be awe at being known, or hunger to know, for example. Now is the time for "oratio", the praying of your response.

Step Four

Express to God as simply as you can the impression the words have made on you. You may wish to thank him or ask questions. Or you may want to respond by remaining in a loving silence appreciating the grace or attitude the Scripture has instilled. Your prayer may move into contemplation, "contemplatio", a simple being in Christ with God in which all you are aware of is that you are being attracted towards God like the needle of a compass finding north.

Step Five

After a time, distractions will set in. You may bring the prayer time to a close with a thanksgiving or the Lord's Prayer. If distractions come before you are ready to finish begin again at the point where you left off and expect to be touched by another word.