



Asking God for the gift of refreshment
through prayer and recreation

Prayer Guide

Identity in Christ – Unity without Uniformity

July 21 – 27

OVERVIEW

I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- Ephesians 4:1-3

As we consider our identity in Christ, this week we explored our identity as one unified family made up of individuals who are unique expressions of Jesus with unique gifts. The way Paul describes it in chapter 4, each person does not just have a gift from God, each person is a gift from God. The goal is that each person is built up into maturity in Christ, but also that the whole community of believers is built up into the maturity of Christ. The full expression of Jesus is not just an individual, but a community of individuals that are unified in Jesus.

PRACTICE REVIEW

Quiet. Take a few minutes to quiet yourself in God's presence. Rest in His love for you.

Listening Prayer. See page 2

Pray for our church family. Please pray through Colossians 1:9-12 for our church family.

Simple Prayer. Close your time with a simple prayer of gratitude to God for his presence, love, and goodness in your life.

LISTENING PRAYER

Listening prayer is the practice of learning how to quiet your inner thoughts to make room to hear God's voice. This is one of my personal favorite practices. It is also one of the most difficult because the human mind is fast and busy and works furiously to fill the void of silence. And the world we live in only magnifies this problem.

But for those who persevere and don't quit, the rewards are spectacular. The ability to quiet the mind and listen for God is a beautiful experience of love, peace and joy. Nobody achieves this quickly, yet it is available to everyone, even the most ADD personality, if you are patient and persistent.

Listening Prayer has these basic steps:

Breathe. Start with a few minutes of deep breathing. Focus on clearing your mind. Some like to simply pray "Jesus" or "Come Holy Spirit" as they breathe. I like to focus on my breathing as representative of taking in the life of Jesus by the Spirit.

Quiet. Sit in silence for a few minutes. This is generally the hardest step as our thoughts try to force their way into our attention. (Tip: bring a notepad with you and write down intrusive thoughts until they stop). Ask God for help in silencing your thoughts.

Ask God to speak to you.

Listen. Remember, the Spirit has direct access to your mind and your imagination. He may speak in a variety of ways, including a thought, a Scripture, a word, a phrase, an impression, a picture in your mind, a vision (like a little movie in your mind), a song, or a feeling/emotion.

Test. Because this is a highly subjective experience, it is particularly important to test what you hear against Scripture and to share it with those in your church community.

If you do not hear anything, don't worry or condemn yourself. It is ok. Just give thanks for God's presence and keep practicing until you do sense God speaking in some way.

