



Peace Preparatory
ACADEMY

**I WILL BE A
PEACEMAKER**

A THREE PART DEVOTIONAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR.....2

HOW TO READ GUIDE.....3

PART 1: PROPHET.....4

- Introduction and Guiding Prayer.....4
- Day 1: Truth Telling.....6
- Day 2: Vision Casting.....8
- Day 3: Recalibrating10
- Day 4: Witnessing.....12

PART 2: PRIEST.....14

- Introduction and Guiding Prayer.....14
- Day 1: Proximate to Pain.....16
- Day 2: Persistent.....18
- Day 3: Patient.....20
- Day 4: Partners with God.....22

PART 3: PRACTITIONER.....24

- Introduction and Guiding Prayer.....24
- Day 1: Examine Our Activities26
- Day 2: See the Image of God.....28
- Day 3: Be Empowered.....30
- Day 4: Endure with Christ.....32

Friends,

Each morning our students start the day with a Student Creed. It begins, “I am valuable because Jesus died for me!” and ends, “I will be a peacemaker! Amen.” As they say these words, we pray the meaning sinks in. We pray that an identity rooted in the person and work of Jesus empowers the students to live as those who trust in and follow Him so that they are a loving, kind, truth seeking, peacemaking presence in our world. Said more simply, we pray that their being informs their doing. Isn’t that our hope as well? Don’t we want to be formed into people who love and serve more like Jesus each day?

The times are disorienting, the world chaotic, thoughts and emotions consuming, and many of us want to know what to do. Where do we go from here? A more essential question may be how do we go from here? For followers of Jesus, living informed by the story of God as written in the Bible, we must be concerned not just with where we are going, but how we will get there. The kind of presence we have in the world must come from a posture of pursuing our identities as we find them in God’s word.

This three-part devotional is meant to be an invitation to explore three identities that can be pursued by every follower of Jesus: prophet, priest, and practitioner. It can be used in a personal setting, a small group, or even a church-wide study. We prayerfully commend it to you as a gift and a resource to light the path to healing for this journey on which we all find ourselves. It will be released in three parts, so part 1 and 2 are included below.

Humbly,

Benjamin Wills
Founder, Head of School



HOW TO READ GUIDE FOR

**I WILL BE A
PEACEMAKER**

GUIDING PRAYER

**ANCHORING
SCRIPTURES**

**DAILY
MEDITATION**

BREATH PRAYER

- Say the guiding prayer silently or aloud as you beginning your time with God. There are three different guiding prayers, which should be used throughout their corresponding week.
- Use the scripture at the beginning of each movement as a trail into the greater narrative; read the passages in and around where they can be found for greater depth and context.
- Read each daily meditation with a companion, either another person or even a journal where you can record thoughts, questions, or emotions that come up as you read the words.
- Pray the breath prayer throughout your day as a simple way to bring your thoughts back to the scripture and meditation you have read.

PART 1
Prophet

The role of the prophet in the Biblical narrative is one that is difficult to miss. Not only the major and minor prophets we know from the Old Testament, but also the prophetic voice of characters like John the Baptist embody some key roles we can look to today to understand our assignments in the world. The prophets we see are truth telling, vision casting, recalibrating and witnessing to the world of a new order. In each of these four reflections, we will look at one of those aspects, and it is my prayer that God will use these meditations to form our hearts and stir our imaginations to be present in the world in a way that makes the activity of God more clear today.

GUIDING PRAYER

Loving God, make us instruments of your peace. Cultivate in us a prophetic spirit, to speak the truth in love, to cast a vision to a world seeking clarity, to recalibrate our bearings towards the things you desire, and to bear witness to the Kingdom of heaven coming in our midst. Amen.

DAY 1

Truth Telling

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

-Ephesians 4:14-15

Speaking the truth in love is more than saying harsh things with a smile. It is the responsibility we have as those who have walked with Jesus to speak truthfully about the areas in our own lives and in the world that are incompatible with loving God and neighbor. Evil and unjust systems, structures, or individual actions (whether our own or those of others) have accelerated pain in our world. We have to be willing to examine our biases, prejudices, or even blindspots that keep us from seeing and knowing those hurting across the street and around the globe. The prophetic voices we encounter in the scriptures regularly challenge God's people by reminding them who they are to be in the world and who God is to be in the world for them and others.

The times in which we are living beckon a people shaped to speak into these moments. Where poverty and hunger persists, where injustice is allowed to thrive, and where love for country trumps love for neighbor, we must be a people who are willing to truthfully look at the sordid past of our country, our communities, and even our own lives. We must be willing to see, to speak, and to act in the prophetic ways of Jesus. In order to do so, we must be willing to speak the truth in love and name these places of sin and pain.

The work is to speak to ourselves as well as to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and it is a maturing work. Where current events in our country have highlighted deep fractures that have long persisted, we must be willing to dig in for the long, slow work of seeking justice and healing where there has been injustice and brokenness. This may cause tension within families, the loss of relationships, and even the loss of opportunities in our careers and lives for advancement. Paul warns us however that a failure to do this work opens us up to be tossed back and forth by the waves and likewise disables the roots of peace from making deep and lasting change in our lives and in the world. Consider what work God would do in and through you as you seek to speak the truth in love.

BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Reveal your truth to me.

GUIDING QUESTION

What areas is the Lord revealing to me for further exploration and time with the Holy Spirit?

Vision-Casting

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

-Matthew 5:9

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus radically reshapes for us how we ought to see the world. He casts a vision for us and models for us what it looks like to prophetically reorient a moment, clarify for a culture, and shift an entire worldview. He's asking his listeners, past and present, to imagine the world by a completely different set of rules and standards. Throughout the biblical narrative, God uses the prophetic voice to remind the reader and listener of the original design and vision for the world: shalom, nothing broken, nothing missing, everything as it was intended to be. Followers of Jesus today can and should engage in this type of prophetic vision casting.

Many of us fail to realize how we daily participate with a vision for the world that is misaligned with God's original intent. If we do not find ourselves identifying regularly with those on the margins of our society, if we do not find ourselves looking for that which is unseen and unknown, we can casually slip into places of comfort and privilege far removed from the work God intends to do in the world. The places in our world where God appears to be absent, and where things do not appear as they should are the breeding ground for the prophetic imagination. These are the places on which God calls us to look with honesty, determine what has gone wrong, and imagine anew what is possible--and probable--with God's help. When we regularly situate ourselves in these places, we can be a people rooted in the work of peacemaking.

With our words and our actions we can shape for those around us a vision for life beyond the categories, systems, and ways in which our world currently operates, ways which do not lead towards the thriving of all of those made in God's image. Many of us have settled for the world as it is, a world where injustice is allowed to flourish in the name of personal success or security. To stand for the thriving of all people created in God's image requires an embrace of discomfort and casts a prophetic vision. For example, despite discomfort and resistance, Moses was called to speak to and oppose the slavery of the children of Israel. He led God's people out of slavery and into the wilderness where God would form in them a heart of complete and total dependence on God. Pressing into a new vision comes with its challenges, but the follower of Jesus willing to engage can make peace through this kind of prophetic presence. Consider today the vision your life casts to those around you.

BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Shape my vision.

GUIDING QUESTION

What areas is the Lord revealing to me for further exploration and time with the Holy Spirit?

DAY 3

Recalibrating

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying,
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

-Matthew 3:1-2

John the Baptist comes in a long line of prophetic voices sent to call God’s people back to the heart of God. Making clear that God ordered the world for a specific purpose and recalibrating people to that purpose are telltale signs of the prophetic voice in scripture. Along with those in scripture, we regularly find ourselves disoriented by the culture around us or the worldview that has shaped us. We need to be reminded of God’s heart to redeem and restore all that has been made. And we need to be reminded that this takes work. Recalibration is meant to take not just our heads and our hearts to new places, but to activate our hands in service to the one who created all we see.

The call for those willing to follow is to join Jesus in reshaping, rebuilding, and restoring the world. So often in our lives we see the prophetic posture as one who simply pronounces, but John the Baptist reminds his followers that there is a specific role in preparing. Preparing the world to look more like the heaven that is to come is the work of those who follow Jesus. With our time, our talents, and our treasures we can reshape the world by looking honestly at its present condition, situating ourselves in uncomfortable places, and then living in ways that demonstrate God’s heart for the restoration of all people and all places.

When we receive this reminder from scripture, from someone in our lives, or directly from the Holy Spirit, we become the prophetic voices for others, helping to recalibrate to the way God wants us to live in the world. To live for the sake of others, for those unseen, and for those unknown is a daily choice to live prophetically. For John the Baptist, this looked like calling people to repentance and baptizing them. Consider the areas of your own life where God is asking you to reorient to a level of greater concern for the ways and purposes of God in the world and to walk in those ways.

BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Recalibrate my direction.

GUIDING QUESTION

In what areas of my life am I knowingly or unknowingly walking against the purposes of God?

Witnessing

So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

-Luke 7:22-23

We all have a tendency to want a degree of certainty. Consequently, that which cannot be easily known or unfamiliar thoughts, ideas, or experiences can quickly raise our doubt meters. Jesus knew this. As he went about doing miracles, he was often questioned: could it be true? Was he truly the Messiah? The simplicity of Jesus' response should anchor us in an unbelieving and doubt-filled world. He says to go and report what has been seen and heard. The prophetic posture in our world today can be demonstrated in those willing to do likewise.

Our prophetic identities should compel us to witness. Wherever we see the activity of God in the world, whenever we experience healing in our own lives, we should bear witness to the world that the plans and purposes of God are true, and they are unfolding before our eyes. The prophetic identity gives us the assurance of planting our feet firmly in the world we see now and the world to come in Christ as we daily taste God's healing and restoring work.

When we are able to look at the world truthfully, share God's vision, and recalibrate ourselves to walk in the ways of Jesus, we must then bear witness to the incredible fruit that will be produced in our lives and in those around us. The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, and when produced in the world today, these are the ingredients to a peacemaking posture concerned with the thriving of all people and all places. Whether it is sharing with a friend, family member, neighbor, or stranger, consider today where you can bear witness to the power of God in your life and the lives of those around you.



BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Reveal your work to me.



GUIDING QUESTION

Where have I seen God at work and where can I share that work with someone else?



PART 2


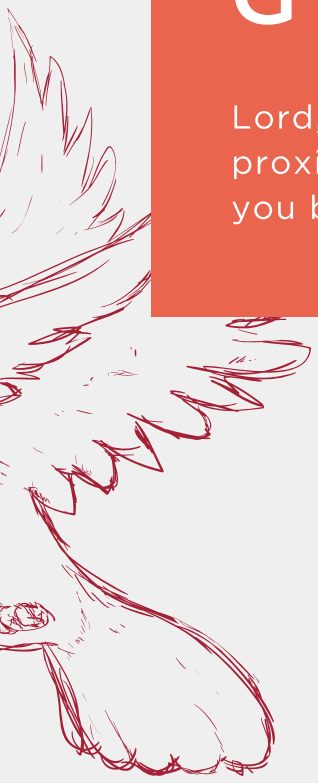
Priest

The role of the priest in the biblical narrative becomes clearer with time. Priests serve as intermediaries, those who go between God and man. And as the scriptures unfold, the role of priests culminates perfectly in Jesus, our great High Priest. Throughout the Old Testament God's people are referred to as a kingdom of priests. Into the New Testament, Peter reminds them that chosenness and priesthood are identities to be lived out as the beloved of God and in light of the resurrection of Jesus. By using Jesus' life as a living example of what it means to occupy the identity of priest in our lives and the passage from Luke 10 in which he sends the 72, it is my prayer that the Holy Spirit refreshes your vision for how to be present in a particular way with the hurting in our world.



GUIDING PRAYER

Lord, give us your heart. As priests, strengthen us to be proximate to pain, persistent, patient in trials, and partners with you by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Proximate to Pain

And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

-Luke 10: 2-3

Jesus' life is the tangible and visible representation of God's heart to proximally participate in the healing of the world. God's putting on flesh and dwelling amongst us is a signal to our hearts and minds that healing happens in close contact. All through the gospels we see the touch of Jesus, his presence in the midst of a storm, his hands and feet animated by His love for all that He has created to be healed and restored. Jesus signifies to us that we do not simply have a "do-as-I-say God," but a "do-as-I-do God". A critical marker of those who seek to live out of a priestly identity is a desire to follow Jesus and willingness to be proximate to pain.

When Jesus sends the 72, He sends them into places of need in the world. As we live out of our priestly identity today, we must explore not only where God is sending us, but also where we presently stand. This primary work of understanding our proximity to pain is a willingness to open our hearts and eyes to the hurting in our midst. Many of us must wrestle with our desire for comfort, ease, and safety. Although these are not wrong desires, following Jesus may cost us some of these things. To be sent as lambs in the midst of wolves is to understand that we will be moved beyond comfort and safety and into more dangerous places.

The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus became an example for how to live in this tension. He was sent from the ultimate place of comfort and safety in order to make that same comfort and safety possible for those wounded by the sin and brokenness of this world. To operate out of our identity as priests is to stand in this same gap. Priests stand as those who have been with the risen Jesus, filled by the Holy Spirit, and then to move into the places in need of healing in our world today. We move towards pain out of a confidence that this is where we will see Jesus work because it is where we have seen Him work throughout scripture.



BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Send me.



GUIDING QUESTION

Where could I take a step towards a person or situation in need of healing today?



Persistent

Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.

-Luke 10:5-8

The Jesus we encounter in the gospels persists. In the story just before the sending of the 72, He describes a life of following Him. In an ordinary conversation, walking down the road, He shares that He has no place to lay his head, that he has no time to stop to bury the dead, and that anyone who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God. Jesus models this persistence by continually moving forward towards the pain of others and the healing of the world. We can look no further than His willingness to endure suffering, shame, and ultimately death to see the purposes of God accomplished and to understand true persistence.

A life modeled after Jesus, one that lives from an identity as priest, is a life that persists in pursuing the healing of people and places. The manner in which the 72 are sent reminds us of the slow work of remaining. Jesus called those particular followers to engage in a deep level of trust and dependence on others, and ultimately God, when he directed them to stay in homes and rely on their hosts for sustenance. In the same way, we are reminded that persistence is preceded by God's timely provision. Jesus understands, better than we ever will, the needs of the places we are being sent. Likewise, the same spirit of God that motivated Jesus knows and empowers our ability to see healing in those places.

Trust often becomes a barrier for many of us to persistence. The identity of a priest relies on and cultivates a deep trust that wherever God sends us, the provision to remain and the conditions for healing will come from His hands. What is unknown or unseen to us is known by God. Therefore, we can confidently stand in the gap so that healing can be experienced in our midst and through our hands when we persist. In this way, the priest becomes not only one who stands between but also one who stays between until God's healing shows up.



BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Keep me.



GUIDING QUESTION

Where do I need to persist in trusting God to show up and heal?



DAY 3

Patient

But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

-Luke 10:10-11

Jesus' life is a constant reminder that God understands pain and rejection. Careful observation of the gospel narratives makes clear that Jesus is walking in situations surrounded by impossibility, death, and tension. His posture in the midst of turmoil indicates the kind of patience that comes from relying on God alone. Proximity to painful situations and persistence in these moments will produce the kind of patience we should seek to cultivate in our lives.

Jesus' words to the 72 indicate that rejection is inevitable. He prepares them beforehand for trials that will come to those who proclaim the coming Kingdom and participate in healing people and places. The encouragement to shake off the dust and continue on is a reminder that patience can still grow in the soil of disappointment or discouragement. Anchoring ourselves in the knowledge that the kingdom of God has come near is an encouragement for the sent, even today.

Hopelessness grows in places where we fail to hold in tension the good God is willing and able to do with the reality we do not always see God working in the present. Hopefulness, on the other hand, grows when we rely on the power and presence of God to go before us with the expectation of healing and renewal. The identity of a priest possesses a hopeful, patient presence. To be sent towards inevitable rejection feels harsh apart from an understanding that our temporary situation is a part of God's eternal plans. Those plans are to heal, restore, and renew all that is broken in our midst. Patience will allow us to participate with God in that process.



BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Grow patience in me.



GUIDING QUESTION

What situations are growing patience in me?



Partners with God

I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

-Luke 10:12

Jesus' life is a model of partnership with God. In the book of John, Jesus tells His followers He is only able to do what the father tells him. Jesus's interdependence with the father is the perfect example of how we ought to engage God as collaborative partners, empowered by God's Holy Spirit, in the healing of the world. Our ability to be proximate to pain, to persevere, and to be patient as we wait on God's ultimate plans prepares us to be partners with God.

Instead of being lone actors, operating from the identity of a priest postures ourselves as conduits and facilitators of the activity of God. Partnership with God is critical to understanding God's heart revealed throughout the Biblical narrative. The reference to Sodom in the end of this sending passage would have reminded the hearers of a group of people who moved in the world in opposition to God's heart. In Ezekiel 16 Sodom is described as "arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy."

Partners with God grow their imaginations for the activity of God while in the soil of the scriptures and in relationship with the Holy Spirit. When we open the scriptures, we see God's breath on every page, animating us to care for those who are powerless to change their situations, those in need of healing. When we catch this vision to partner with God in healing and then move towards those in need, we have understood our identity as priests. We move from this identity saying "yes" to wherever God leads.



BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Partner with me.



GUIDING QUESTION

Where am I acting alone that I could be partnering with God?



PART 3


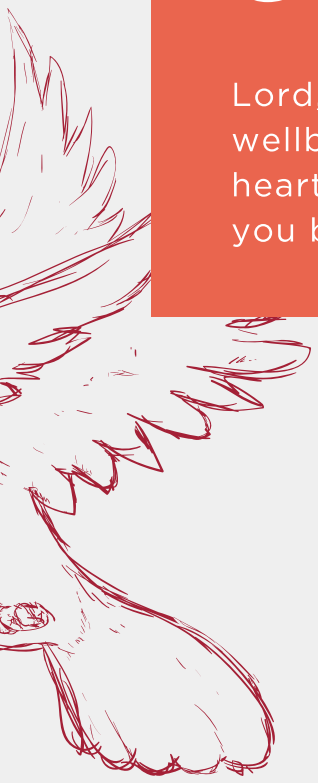
Practitioner

The scriptures are an incredible reference point of the activity of God in the world through a particular period of time and a particular group of people. With access to this word, we ought to seek to likewise actively engaged with God in the world today. The places we spend our time, talent, and treasure can be a gauge for us to discern our activity in the world, knowing that God's heart is to restore all things. Jesus invites us to see God in flesh, mending what's broken in our world in an active and participatory way. He casts a radical vision of love and inclusion and demonstrates acts of mercy and justice as living parables. To be practitioners is to daily live in ways that are animated by the Holy Spirit so that we live and look like the Jesus we find in scripture. It is my prayer that in this call to live as practitioners, you sense the invitation of Jesus to colabor on earth so that we may experience heaven in our homes, cities, and nations.



GUIDING PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the invitation to work with you for the wellbeing of others in our world. Give us minds to be creative, hearts that love what you do, and hands that work alongside you by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Examine Our Activities

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

-James 1:22-27

Being doers of the word, not simply hearers is a perfect characterization of the practitioner. James doesn't mince words in describing the activity of one who hears the word and chooses not to do what it says. He says this person "deceives themselves." However a person who looks at the word, perceives the freedom it offers, and acts accordingly is on to something. For too long dualistic thinking has led to a divide within communities of faith. Tribalism and other elements of division have distracted from the scriptures' clear call to bring its fruit to bear in doing what it says.

It is not faith or work, it is faith AND work; the practitioner models this with their lives. It is good and helpful to do a careful examination of the scriptures to discern motivations for the kind of activity we join our lives with. However, to use the scriptures as a scapegoat to avoid responsibility for the tangible realities of our world is not an option. Throughout his letter, James challenges the readers to explore, examine, and evaluate the alignment between their priorities and those God reveals to us in the scriptures. This is a great place for every practitioner to begin.

James calls the group he is communicating with to consider the orphan and the widow. The orphan and the widow stand as types for marginalization have existed through the ages. While both the widow and the orphan still have great need in our world today, perhaps there are other vulnerable people or places God has placed on your heart. In the context of the community of faith and scripture, it is good and wise to discern where or to whom God may be calling you in order to decide what natural step you will take towards being a doer of God's word.



BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Examine me.



GUIDING QUESTION

What is a natural step I can take towards actively participating with time, treasure, or talent in a place God is at work today?

See the Image of God

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

-Matthew 25:31-36

Jesus doubles down teaching us to care for those in need by identifying with the needy. Throughout the gospels we see Jesus using parabolic language and story to help his disciples put pictures to the potent words of the Kingdom. In this particular passage he goes a step further, placing himself in the story, not as the one providing the relief, but as the one in need of healing. With this imagery we get a sense of just how serious Jesus was about our responsibility to one another and the kind of care we should be offering to the overlooked.

Practitioners have a keen sense and understanding that when they serve those in need, they are serving Jesus himself. This is a cultivated reality that requires intentionality. While the culture of Jesus’ day and ours form us to look past or away from the pain and need in our world, Jesus asks his followers to demonstrate their faith by taking action towards pain. Cloth the naked. Welcome the stranger. Visit the prisoner. Jesus is both giving examples of practical action and reminding the disciples that his image is in all people, even those in pain.

While the Imago Dei, the image of God in all people is something we talk about often, living it is less common. To live with an understanding that all people are made in the image of God is to join God in pressing in towards those Jesus describes and those we see on the margins of our society today. Those who culture does not see, either by direct action or passivity, are exactly who Jesus calls us to. Practitioners regularly check in with the Holy Spirit, asking for ears to hear, eyes to see, and hands to move towards those in need with the love and practical care of Christ.

BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Help me see.

GUIDING QUESTION

What person or group of people is Jesus inviting me to move towards with practical care?

Be Empowered

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

-Acts 6:1-7

Being a practitioner is not a solo endeavor. Engaging in the work of moving towards the hurt and need in our world in practical ways is now and has always been the work of the church. In the book of Acts, we find the early church working this out in real time. As an argument comes up about care for the suffering widows or the ministry of sharing the gospel, a powerful both/and conversation ensues. The apostles rightly discern that both the preaching of the word and the care of others should be prioritized. The result? An increase in the word of God, disciples, and those obedient to the faith.

When practitioners are identified, prayed for, and empowered in their actions by the ministry of the local church, we taste the fruits of the Kingdom. We understand from the scriptures that the church has historically used the ingenuity, creativity, and flexibility of its body, which is made up of many parts, to see healing in the world and the message of Jesus carried forth. From generation to generation this has worked itself out in a variety of ways, and now as much as ever, the church can lead an apathetic and indifferent culture once again towards engaging the problems in our world in practical ways.

Though in culture we see social justice trending and movements swell up overnight, real and holistic solutions lie in the hands of those who walk with the resurrected Jesus. The one who has defeated sin, death, and all powers of darkness stands poised to empower His church to practically participate with Him in overcoming the darkness and pain that persists in the world today. Spirit empowered practitioners who find their grounding and foundation in the context of the local church through the fellowship of believers will have the covering and confidence to boldly take practical steps towards those in need.



BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Build your church.



GUIDING QUESTION

Where could I ask for support in moving towards practical needs in the world in my local church?

Endure with Christ

“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

“I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent.

If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

-Revelation 3:1-6

Practitioners settle into the discomfort of endurance. In the letter to the church in Sardis in Revelation, Jesus reveals that while he has seen some works begun, they remain incomplete. Practitioners recognize that enduring in the work of moving towards the hurting in our world and being repairers of brokenness takes its toll and has the propensity to lull us to sleep with the scope, size, and seriousness of the need. Jesus calls the church and its practitioners to awaken from its slumber, which looks like death, and to live from what has been received and heard. This is a call to, first, follow Jesus into the abundant life of Kingdom work and, second, see all of that work completed in the One who completes all things.

Jesus is calling those who will respond to the invitation to wake up, to endurance rooted in the reality that Christ is the conquering King. The arc of scripture moves from the good and perfect creation of the garden, into the sin and brokenness of the world as we know it, and finding its end in all things being made new. Jesus calls us to be those who conquer with him in seeing everything in this world redeemed, renewed, and restored. Practitioners can rest knowing this end will come because the God of all creation has said it will.

These greater realities pull us into active participation in the story of God. Practitioners recognize that the works we begin only find their completion in Christ who has defeated sin, death, and any power or force preventing people and places from flourishing today. They respond to that invitation by examining their own motivations and activities, seeing Christ in those with great need, being empowered by the Body of Christ, and enduring on a firm foundation.



BREATH PRAYER

Breathe In: Lord,
Breathe Out: Sustain me.



GUIDING QUESTION

What activity is God calling me to endure based on the knowledge of its completion in Christ?

