

# Prayer

April 2, 2017

## Read

*Getting Familiar with God's Word*

- Slowly read 1 John 4:7-21 two times

## Reflect

*Taking God's Word into our Hearts*

- Which part of this passage stands out to you as you read it and why?

## Pray

*Responding to God's Word in Prayer*

- Take several minutes and speak to the Lord about what in this passage stood out most to you and why.

## Rest

*Finding Wholeness in God's Word*

- Take the last few minutes of your time in prayer to let your heart and mind rest on this truth that *"We love because he first loved us."*

# Small Groups

## Checking In

*Welcoming and Warming Up (For Small Groups)*

- Practicing Hospitality: *Can you describe one experience you have had where you have suffered for being a Christian?*
- Group Rules: *A Training in Love (1 Timothy 1:5)*
  - a. Do's and Don'ts of Listening
  - b. Confidentiality

## Prayerfulness

*Continuously Remaining in God's Love*

- Read 1 John 4:7-21

- In what ways did God speak to you through his Word and Spirit in this week's worship service?

## Wisdom

*Cherishing and Discerning the Truth in Love*

- Read Matthew 25:14-30 & Revelation 21:8. John tells us that fear has to do with punishment (1 John 4:18). In the parable of the talents, Jesus narrates the story of a man who lived in fear of punishment and who, because of his fear, ended up being punished. John also tells us in the book of Revelation that cowardice leads to punishment. These passages shed light on the truth that fear only leads us headlong into the consequence we are desperate to avoid. How have you experienced fear driving decisions in your life? How have you experienced the consequences of fear in your life?
- Read 1 John 2:2; Romans 3:23-26. The word "propitiation" in 1 John 4:10 has to do with substitutionary sacrifice in which one dies in the place of another. In the Old Testament this took the form of an animal (a sheep, goat, or bull) and pointed to the ultimate substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus. This theme in the Bible has to do with *taking away punishment* by a substitute. Read in this light why is the "fear of punishment" foolish for a Christian? What is and how then does "perfect love" cast out fear?

## Compassion

*Moving Toward the Poor, Marginalized, and Broken in Love*

- Who are people you are afraid of loving?

## Reconciliation

*Repentance and Forgiveness for the Sake of Love*

- How can service to others you are afraid of produce love?

## Checking Out

*Blessing and Sending Out (For Small Groups)*

- What stood out to you about our group time tonight (1-2 sentences each)?
- Close in prayer and read 1 John 4:7-12