

# Being Disciples: Practicing the Way of Jesus

A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

## Practicing the Way of Jesus Together For Brooklyn

Dear RPS family,

It is easy in a reading or study of Philippians to gloss over v. 19-30. In a letter that is filled with rich theological discussion and application, Paul's discussion of sending Timothy and Epaphroditus to Ephesians might sound like simple logistics or travel plans without offering much more. But what Paul offers us here in the middle of his letter is a picture of Christian friendship. Paul's affection and trust for Timothy and Epaphroditus is clear and it reminds us of the importance of friendship in our lives as we seek to practice the way of Jesus together for Brooklyn.

What Paul models for the Philippians and for us is that Christian friendships find their source in the life of God, their fruit in the image of God, and their goal is the kingdom of God. These three men would not be friends under normal conditions. Their ethnicity, age, and calling was too different for them to find common ground in the 1st century. But they were swept up into the life of God and the story of his redemption and now they find themselves friends and partners in ministry. It is the Kingdom of God that is their shared vision as they seek to sacrifice for one another and the church. This model of friendship calls us to consider carefully the nature of our friendships and how we as disciples might maintain our current friendships and open ourselves up to new friends as God brings other people into our lives.

Friendship that calls us to something bigger than ourselves is something we offer to a lonely world. It is the friendship of Christ through our friendship that gives us life, hope and community.

In Christ,  
Chris

### LOOKING AHEAD:

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11.1 | Philippians 3:1-11 The  
Way of Worship

11.8 | Philippians 3:12-4:1  
The Way of Citizenship

11.15 | Philippians 4:2-9 The  
Way of Leadership

11.22 | Philippians 4:10-23  
The Way of Stewardship

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# The Way of Friendship

Study for the Week of 10.25 | Philippians 2:19-30

*No medicine is more valuable, none more efficacious, none better suited to the cure of our temporal ills than a friend to whom we may turn for consolation in time of trouble, and with whom we may share happiness in time of joy.*

*Aelred of Rievaulx*

Look to the Scriptures

- Open in prayer ask God to for wisdom to discern, for eyes to see and ears to hear.

Look to the Text

- What is happening in this passage? What phrases jump out at you?
- Faith - Paul describes Timothy as one who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. How does being genuinely concerned for your welfare become the foundation of Christian friendship?
- Love - Philippians teaches us how to love. Paul speaks with deep affection for Timothy and Epaphroditus. Paul describes Timothy as a son and Epaphroditus as a brother, fellow worker, and soldier. How might all these images shape our understanding of friendship in Christ?
- Hope - Philippians teaches us how to hope in Christ. Christian friendship exists for something larger than itself, the kingdom of God. How is that modeled for us here in this passage, and how does Paul's hope in the Lord Jesus (v. 18) allow him to send his friends to Philippi? How are and should our friendships be marked by our hope in the Lord Jesus?

Listen to one another

- Consider sharing places where you are facing hardship in this season of your life.
- Or pray a version of the Examen such as sharing the following:
  - Consolation: A time in the past week where you felt close to God.
  - Desolation: A time in the past week where you felt far from God.
  - Looking ahead: What are you looking forward to or most worried about in the coming week

Pray

- Spend time praying for one another and our world incorporating both what you have studied and prayer requests in your time of prayer.

Practice

- Paul encourages the Philippians in Phil 4:9 to “practice these things”, so take this time over the next few weeks on 1 or 2 spiritual practices that you would like to work on. It could be something you are currently doing or a new practice you want to take up. You can do this as a group together or as individuals, but consider how you can practice the way of Jesus together during this time. Some suggestions: Daily Scripture reading, keeping Sabbath, fixed-hour prayer, memorize Philippians 2:5-11 together, etc. Talk about how what you have discussed in your group might help your daily/weekly practices.

How are your spiritual practices helping you to have the mind of Christ? How do they lead you out thinking first about yourself and instead thinking and serving others?