

Gospel Community Guide

This week we finish our series on **Faith Practices**; tools that are meant to help us **Cultivate Grace** so that we and our neighbors may flourish in the relational environment of God's garden. We have seen that [Praying Scripture](#) & Practicing [Repentance](#), are activities which *orient us to the conditions* of God's garden. Reminding us that our story is found in the all-encompassing, gracious, and sure story of God's character and purposes. Awakening us to a much larger world! That [Listening](#) in the Spirit is the *fundamental act for all work* in the garden. We recognize that the world is neither limited to us nor controlled by us, so in order to walk wisely we must be ones who hear and see God; most evidently in Jesus! And so we need to practice [Stopping](#), through which we are able to *recognize & enter into the rhythmic seasons* of the garden. Discovering a pattern for life that is attuned to how God works in the good times and the bad. Allowing us to find stability in what often appears to be chaos. We stop through practicing [Mindfulness](#), which helps us to *identify disproportion* in our emotions and experiences while helping us to *respond in proportion*. Giving us an in the moment centering that develops an awareness and release from the tension of circus life. Likewise, the practice of [Sabbath Keeping](#), allows us to recognize the *gift meant to help us flourish* in the most prevalent of all garden activities: *work*, amid the most pervasive of garden resources: *time*. Taking what often is experienced as conflict, and allowing us to live in peace. Then we looked saw that the practice of [Friendship](#), is meant to envelope us into the *relational fabric* of the garden as we are impressed into the slow and steady *cadence* of life in the garden; helping us to experience depth and vividness in our life with one another and God himself. And that [Nurturing](#), is the skill of befriending meant to help one another *discover what story we are living*, what picture is shaping our lives. Creating space to experience, process, and *cultivate story*; so that we might have both abundance and steadfast in the garden life; bearing fruit that reproduces. After all, "In the shelter of another person's attention and God's all-surrounding grace, telling my story [reweaves] me."

And finally, our final Faith Practice is one we observe often together: **Communion**. Communion is the ever consistent practice that helps us *recognize the paradox* of life in the garden; a practice the keeps us from getting lost in the upside-down world of the circus; forgetting the reality in which we actually are friends, neighbors, spouses, children, co-workers and the church: **a people of faith**.

1 DISCOVERING OUR FAITH PRACTICE OF [COMMUNION](#)

The faith practice of Communion is given to us to so that we might interpret our real-world emotions and experiences rightly. Often showing us the paradoxical nature of life in the garden in contrast to life in the circus. Life where hope is found in what appears hopeless, peace through entering into conflict, joy in suffering and love in sacrifice.

Think about the practice of communion. What does this practice reveal about the nature of God, our world, and ourselves?

2 PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

The context of communion helps us understand the formative nature of this simple practice. The exercise below is designed to help us recognize the significance of communion and help one another make communion a regular activity in simplicity yet with reverence.

- 1) Begin by reading Luke 22 and John 13 together. Taking note of the similarities and differences in these texts.
- 2) Discuss the context of communion from these texts, taking note of who was there, what Jesus did, what the disciples did or didn't do, and how that shapes your understanding of communion.
- 3) Now break up in to groups of 4 and follow the instructions below
 - a. Take turns "declaring" your need for Jesus. Think about why you needed Jesus to die for you; past and present.
 - b. After each person "declares" have another person "proclaim" what Jesus has done for that person in the elements of communion; serving them the gift of Jesus' body broken and blood poured out to restore them.
 - c. After every person has "declared" once and "proclaimed" at least once; pray together a prayer of Thanksgiving

3 CULTIVATING GRACE THROUGH [COMMUNION](#)

Communion requires no pomp or circumstance, but rather reflection and reverence. **Commit to making the practice of Communion a weekly part of your GC's life together**. Remember down what you hear, think, feel, question, are convicted by etc.!