

GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



Discerning the Invitation of God Together

Week 02 | Waiting Under Pressure (2 Chronicles 20:1-4)

*For a brief overview of why (and how) to engage in each of these practices, you can read the **Guideline For Growing** on our website.*

<https://www.gymeabaptist.org.au/growing/pages/guideline-for-growing>

What is a Discipleship Menu?

A discipleship menu is a selection of discipleship activities to engage in to continue the conversation that begins on Sunday throughout the week. The aim is to extend our interaction as a community of faith around activities that help us follow Jesus every single day. The activities vary from week to week (though there are some standard activities) and you are encouraged to do as many as you find helpful (like a menu; you don't need to eat everything on it!). Do them on your own (God and you), with a couple of friends (you and a few), or in a Life Group (you and a crew). The important thing is to do a few!

GBC Sermon Podcast and The Big 3 Podcast

Don't forget you can review this week's sermon on the GBC Sermon Podcast. The sermon is usually uploaded by Monday afternoon. You can also listen in to the Big 3 podcast; a weekly podcast where Matt, Jess, and Marc sit down and continue the conversation by engaging in three big questions raised by the congregation about the sermon. The Big 3 comes out on Wednesdays.

Overview

In this passage, Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah and Jerusalem face an immediate, external crisis – an invading army approaching their southern border. Instead of panicking, scrambling to get the army ready, forming new alliances, or sending a delegation to sue for peace, they gather in Jerusalem to seek the Lord. Unlike just about any other account in Chronicles, the people are actively involved.

The ability of the king and his people to wait for the Lord's response under pressure is seemingly made possible by their faithfulness in 'normal times'. In the preceding passages we find that Jehoshaphat had done all he could to insure that the people of Judah knew the ways of the Lord and lived accordingly. He himself demonstrated humility to be corrected in his own obedience. These foundational practices and attitudes enable them to trust in the Lord's guidance and not in their own solutions and plans.

Passages to Read

We believe that the Word of God is living and active and that reading and reflecting on it is one way we encounter God. As you read, we encourage people to ask a set of simple questions: What stands out to you? What questions do you have? What is the invitation of God to you? Who can you tell?

In this week's sermon, Marc drew our attention to the background to the extraordinary response in 2 Chronicles 20:1-4. Take time to reflect on these passages in more detail. What connections do you notice between them?

- 2 Chronicles 15:1-19
- 2 Chronicles 16:1-14
- 2 Chronicles 17:1-19
- 2 Chronicles 18:1-19:3
- 2 Chronicles 19:4-11

Questions to Reflect on

These questions can be used as the basis of a small group discussion or as journal questions. As with the rest of this menu, use the questions that are most useful for you or your crew.

1. Jehoshaphat took an active role in the discipleship of his people; insuring that they were taught the law of God. Who has taken an active role in your discipleship? What did they do to invest in you? How has their influence shaped your ability to respond to difficult situations?
2. When you face pressure what keeps you from turning to God immediately?
3. What spiritual practices have you found helpful for building trust in God?
4. One of the things that we find reflected in the text is a willingness to reflect on the prior work of God (e.g., the exodus). What events in your past would you include in your list of great things God has done that builds your confidence today?

A Prayer to Pray

These are the areas of prayer that were listed in The Long Read for our discernment process as a congregation. Commit to pray through these.

You may also want to choose one to focus on each day and practice what is known as “breath prayer” where we pray a short prayer (one breath long) as often as it is brought to mind. Convert one of these prayers into a one sentence prayer and commit to praying it for that day. Repeat as often as you want. E.g., Lord Jesus, align our hearts to your heart. Amen.

- Thanks for the ways our community of faith has responded to God’s invitation in the past.
- Thanks for God’s faithfulness to our community of faith.
- That God would move our hearts for his purposes and plans.
- That God would fulfill his word to us to build his church and make all things new.
- That we would fulfill our mission, vision, and purpose.
- That we would genuinely be indifferent; open to hear God’s “now” invitation.
- For the appointment of the Discernment Group.
- For our Day of Discernment on Saturday September 17; that we would be unified and truly see God at work in this process.

A Prayer to Pray

This has been taken and adapted from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun’s Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform us (IVP, 2015).

“People who know God learn to wait.” Calhoun observes that we cannot retrieve the past and the future is out of our control, but the present, right now, is where it is possible to be with God. In waiting we learn to let go of our control and expectations and to trust God. As we learn to wait, we can develop a mellow, forgiving heart rather than a demanding or angry one.

The practices she suggests include: not imagining the worst case scenario while we wait, letting go of control, surrendering our time table, allowing others space and time, and stating in the present moment with God.

She invites reflection through the following questions:

1. What happens inside you when you have to wait in traffic? In a long line? For clarification? For someone who is late? For God to act?
2. Looking back at your life, when has a time of waiting produced something of God in you? How did that happen?

And to practice waiting she suggests the following:

1. When you end up waiting, practice letting go of your need to control. What happens? Notice what comes up while you wait and talk to God about it. You can use the time that is given – or you can waste it in fretting.
2. Practice waiting by not interrupting or by allowing others to speak before you do. Ask God to help you listen more deeply to what is being said so you can respond with grace and love.
3. Choose to drive in the slow lane. Write a snail-mail letter. Eat your food slowly. Take the time it takes to do these things well.