



# Who We Are

Fall Focus 2023



# WHO WE ARE

AS

## THE PEOPLE OF GOD

AND

## WAITE PARK CHURCH

*"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." ~ 1Peter 2:9-12*



# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Welcome to our fall Focus Season. Focus seasons are a time when we align our small groups with our Sunday service to concentrate on a topic we want to lean into. The topics come out of much prayer and discussion among the staff and board as we consider what God wants to do in our church.

In the movie *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel, a mermaid, dreams of living on the land, rather than the sea. One day, she finds a bag of human stuff and takes it to her gannet friend Scuttle to find out what it is. Scuttle reaches into the bag and pulls out a fork.

Ariel excitedly asks, "What is it?"

"It's a dinglehopper!" answers Scuttle.

"Humans use these little babies to straighten their hair out." He then proceeds to comb through his own hair to demonstrate.

Can a fork be used to straighten our hair? Of course, but it's not well-suited for it. If we went through life using a fork for a comb, we would subject ourselves to a lifetime of needless

frustration (and hairy meals!). This happens any time we use something in a way that is inconsistent with its original purpose.

The church in America today is plagued with scandals and declining attendance and participation. Perhaps for the first time in its long history, Christians are questioning their need to participate in the life of the Church. Some of this stems from the over-individualization of our society that devalues group participation of any kind. Some of it comes from real hurt and disappointing experiences in the Church. But I believe that much of it can be traced back to a lack of understanding of what the Church is and why it was created. This misunderstanding of what the church is for has caused church leaders and laypeople alike to misuse God's gift of the Church.

With this in mind, our fall Focus Season will be called "Who We Are." By "we" we mean Waite Park Church, but more than Waite Park Church. You see, I've attended countless conferences and read many books that tell pastors that our church must have a "mission statement." They say that if you don't have a mission statement, the church will become aimless. I'm certainly not against mission statements. I think they can be quite useful as long as the church actually uses them to guide decisions. (Which seldom happens anyway.)

But I have come to believe that in order for churches to know where they're going, we need to first understand where we came from. When we understand where we came from, we better understand our purpose. And only when we know the purpose for which we were created, can we be true to the mission God gives us. (And it IS God's mission, not ours.)

### **Our Identity Statement**

Over the past couple of years, the church board and staff have been considering what God created the Church to be and we have come up with what we call an "identity statement." Neurotheologian Jim Wilder says that the most powerful motivating factor in our lives is our identity. Our brain is wired to ask, "Who am I? And how do my people act in situations like this?"

This series is an attempt to answer the question, "Who am I?" or maybe more so, "Who are we?" Who are the people of God? What is the church for?

As we've prayed and studied and talked, this is how we answered the question:

"We are the family of God, called and empowered by God to give ourselves for the glory of God and the good of the world."

Each week of the series helps us unpack the various aspects of that statement.

Week 1: The Family of God

Week 2: Called by God

Week 3: Empowered by God

Week 4: To Give Ourselves

Week 5: What is Shalom?

Week 6: The Glory of God and the Good of the World

You'll notice that week five seems a little off-topic, but trust us, it's a critical week to understand our role in the world.

As we live in an increasingly secular society, it will be as critical as ever that we understand who we are. We are a community that is different from the neighborhood around us—we were intended to be. But that difference allows us to be a refuge for people who society leaves lonely and purposeless. As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, we are called to be salt and light in the world, but how can we be what Jesus called us to be if we lose our saltiness or our light dims?

Each week, the book provides prayers, resources, and applications to equip you with the skills to love people well at each one of these thresholds. Set



aside time each week to pray that God would strengthen your relationships in order to share the incredible gift of eternal life.

**DISCUSS:** This section includes a debrief of each week's application sections. Don't skip it! The feedback we receive from others in our group will be invaluable in growing to understand and embody these truths. These questions will guide your small group discussions.

**REFLECT:** Plan time each week to review and respond to the questions. These questions are designed to help us think more deeply about these values and examine our assumptions as we grow together. We want our minds renewed during this focus season.

**PRACTICE:** For our faith to fully mature, we must put what we are learning into action. Each week has a practice to take what we are learning and put into practice. Some weeks have several options listed. Select one that fits best into your schedule. Please try to keep the practice in the week with value of our identity. We desire these practices help us grow individually and as a community. Practices with a ✨ next to them are ones that would also work

well to try as a family.

**PRAYER:** One key aspect of our role as the Church comes through prayer. Romans 12:12 says, “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Let’s be filled with hope and faithful prayer. Each week contains a Scripture passage to pray alongside these values.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

At times, we will reference an external resource like a video, book, or podcast, use the QR code for easy access to these additional resources at <https://www.waiteparkchurch.org/whoweare>

So, we hope you’ll fully engage over the course of these next few weeks. Prioritize worship and small group attendance. Do the reflection and practices outlined in the book. If you have kids, do the family practices as well. We are excited to take this journey together and be everything God created us to be.

Use the QR code for quick access to additional resources:  
<https://www.waiteparkchurch.org/whoweare>



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# WEEK 1 //

## THE FAMILY OF GOD

### INTRO:

The Bible has many metaphors for the Church: the saints, the people of God, the bride of Christ, and the body of Christ to name a few. But one of the most common descriptions of the Church is “the family of God.” Of course, this begins with the fact that when we put our faith in Christ, we become a child of God (John 1:12), are adopted into God’s family (Rom 8:15) and become heirs with Christ to the promise (Gal 3:22). But the metaphor of the family of God is more than just a theological curiosity—it has real, practical application.

The Church is called to function as family, not just in theory, but in practice. This week, we’ll take a look at what the bible means when it calls the Church “the family of God” and consider some ways our local church can function as family.

*“For you are all  
children of God  
through faith  
in Jesus Christ.  
And all have  
been united  
with Christ.”*

*Galatians 3:26-27*

## DISCUSS // GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What is your intellectual and/or emotional reaction when the Bible talks about the church being more important than your biological family? (see Matthew 12:46-50) In what ways is it challenging? And in what ways is this comforting?

2. How might the idea of church as family look differently in an individualistic society (like ours) than in a collectivist society (like the biblical world)?

3. How does our church live out and fall short of living out this biblical vision of church as family?

4. What are ways that we carry our Father's name? How do we demonstrate this in our day to day lives? What about mutual care, commitment to good, and nurturing the next generation?

5. As a small group, what will we do to live this out together? What practices will we do to live like a family within our small group? We are family with our whole church family, but small groups are a unique opportunity to live this out in these smaller communities. Select options that stretch your comfort level with being part of this community.

## // REFLECT //

Start your reflection by asking God to give you wisdom, so you can be shaped by Scripture and this community towards faithfulness.

1. How does church feel like an activity rather than a family? How does our church live out and fall short of living out the biblical vision of the church as a family from the sermon?

2. Can you identify some of the relationships that feel or have begun to feel like family at WPC?

3. How have you seen God use you to carry His name well, stay committed to good even when it is hard, care for others, and nurture the next generation?



4. How have you missed opportunities to carry His name well, stay committed to good even when it is hard, care for others, and nurture the next generation?

5. How have you learned to work through conflict? Conflict is part of being a family. How can you grow in repairing and restoring relationships?

## // PRACTICE //

Select just one of the practices below to live out being like a family within our church community this week. Parents, practices with a ✨ next to them are ones that would also work well to try as a family.

### ***We carry our Father's name***

For these practices, select one that will be stretching for you. At the end of the day, take a few minutes to read the verse for each practice and reflect on how well you did in living it out.

- *Practice gratitude.* Each day, write out your grateful moments. Say thank you to the person who contributed to the gratitude moment. (Psalm 100:1-5) ✨
- *Practice speaking life in conversations.* Philippians 4:9 is a good filter for how to speak life into each other. Select a couple people to share the impact they have made using this verse as a guide your speech.
- *Practice humility.* Be more intentional in letting others speak in conversations. Be more intentional in apologizing for errors. (Phil 2:3-5)

### ***Mutual care & Commitment to the good of the family***

- *Share meals together.* Invite a person from our congregation that you have not had the

- opportunity to connect with over for a meal. ✨
- *Donate money to the Benevolence Fund.* When people in our congregation and sometimes our community need assistance, this fund allows us to be able to help each other.
  - *Pray for one another.* Be intentional to pray specifically for a person in our congregation over this week. Share with this person how you are praying for them.
  - *Serve in a role within our church.* Serve on tech or cleaning team. Serve as Kids Park Helper. Serve in your Small Group. ✨ (A note for families: Take this up a notch by finding a way to serve together as a family!)

### ***We nurture the next generation***

- *Welcome kids* when you see them. Give them a wave or a high five and tell them you're happy to see them. And, if you don't know their names, just ask!
- *Ask kids* to serve alongside you in simple ways like passing out bulletins, picking up trash after service, or moving chairs.
- *Encourage kids* when you see them engaging in the life of the church. You might thank them when you see them serving or tell them what a blessing it was to hear them sing.
- *Ask kids* what they like to do for fun or what interests them. Really listen - even if it's something you've never heard of before!

## // PRAYER //

“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.”

~ Ephesians 1:3-6

*Spend time in response to this prayer:*



# WEEK 2 //

## CALLED BY GOD

### INTRO:

Ancient pagan religions taught that kings and priests were made in the image of god. They represented god to the masses. But the Genesis creation story is revolutionary because it tells us that it's not just kings and priests, but all people are the image of God. Unfortunately, we haven't always lived up to that high calling and all creation suffers for it.

That's why God chose a man named Abram and his family to teach them what it looks like to be made in the image of God, so they can in turn model it to the world. This calling extends from the people of Israel to the Church. This blessing is the very heart of what it means to be the Church.

This week will follow the history of the people of God so we can grasp what God has called the Church to be and to do.

*"We can show  
others the  
goodness  
of God, for  
he called us  
out of the  
darkness into his  
wonderful light."*

*1 Peter 2:9b*

## DISCUSS // GROUP QUESTIONS

### 1. Debrief on previous Reflect & Practice

**Sections:** Which reflection question challenged you? Why? What practice did you accomplish?

2. How does Pastor Kory's explanation of the Church compare to how you have viewed the Church in the past?

3. Do you think it's important to go all the way back to the Old Testament to determine the Church's identity? Why or why not?



4. Why is it critical for us to remember the purpose for which God created the Church?

5. Which of the following descriptions of the Church most resonate with you?

- A kingdom of priests
- A holy nation
- God's special possession
- Called out of darkness into his glorious light
- The family of God
- Witnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
- Agents of flourishing

6. Based on this week's teaching, what might need to change for our local church to live out our God-given identity?

## // REFLECT //

Start your reflection by asking God to give you wisdom, so you can be shaped by Scripture and this community towards faithfulness.

- Do I believe I am called to participate in the mission of the people of God?
  
- Think through how you spend your time. Grab your calendar to see what activities fill your days and weeks.

- What activities get your best emotional/mental/physical energy? What do you worry about?
  
- How do your activities reveal your priorities?
  
- How well do these priorities align with our role as the Church?

## // PRACTICE //

This practice builds on the reflection questions. Let's continue to review how your schedule reveals your role as the Church.

- How do you care for others?
- How are you praying for others' needs and for God's power to be demonstrated?
- How is God being reflected through your life?
- How do you care for the poor and marginalized?

- In what ways, do you bear the good news of Jesus?
  
- Part of our calling is understanding how we are gifted to serve and contribute within the body of Christ. We recommend taking a spiritual gifts assessment to help you determine the unique ways that you are wired to demonstrate an aspect of God's character. Use the QR code to access the assessment on our resource page.

Families, if you have elementary-aged kids who'd like to start exploring what their spiritual gifts might be, use the QR code to access the assessment that you can take with them.

Use the QR code for quick access to additional resources:  
<https://www.waiteparkchurch.org/whoweare>



## // PRAYER //

*"We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light."*

*~ Colossians 1:9b-12*

*Spend time in response to this prayer:*



# WEEK 3 //

## EMPOWERED BY GOD

### INTRO:

Last week, we talked about the calling of the people of God—the Church. The truth is, God could have done anything he wanted in the world without us. But for some reason he chose to use humans to accomplish his will.

The people he called—Abraham, Moses, Rahab, Mary and the Apostles—were ordinary, average, sometimes tragically flawed human beings...and yet they accomplished incredible things. How, you ask? Well, they didn't do it by their own power. They had to rely on a power greater than themselves...the power of God. Through their sensitivity and obedience to God's Spirit, they withstood trials they couldn't otherwise, they had wisdom greater than their years and spoke more eloquently than their natural abilities. God called them, but he always gave them the power to accomplish the task ahead of them. This week, we will learn how God will do the same for us.



*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere”*

*Acts 1:8*

## DISCUSS // GROUP QUESTIONS

### 1. Debrief on previous Reflect & Practice

**Sections:** Which reflection question challenged you? Why? What practice did you accomplish?

2. Can you think of instances where people in your life used one of the types of power mentioned by Pastor Kory to bring flourishing: the power of words, the power of modeling, economic power or social power? Can you think of other types of power useful for Christians?

3. What do you think is the primary power our church uses to accomplish our mission? How might we become more empowered by prayer?

4. How would you like to see God use the power of prayer in our small group? How can we practice prayer together?

5. How well do you listen to God and others?

6. How have you been obedient to God even when it was difficult? Did you see God in that act of obedience? If so, how?

## // REFLECT //

Select one of the sections to reflect on: Pray, Listen, or Obey. Start your reflection by asking God to give you wisdom, so you can be shaped by Scripture and this community towards faithfulness.

### **Pray**

- How would you describe your prayer life today? Have you seen God respond to your prayer? If so, how?
- How could you lean into prayer in a way that fits into the normal rhythm of your life? If you are looking for some suggestions, review the prayer practices this week.
- Ask someone you admire how they have incorporated prayer into their lives.

**Listen**

- How well do you listen to others? A good way to begin evaluating how well we listen to God is by evaluating how well we listen to others. Do you consistently seek to understand the person talking? Do you tend to form a response while listening?
- Watch Bible Project video on Shema, the Hebrew word for hear, using the QR code for quick access through our resource page. How does this challenge your understanding of listening to God?
- What is one step you can take to grow in listening in your prayer with God?

Use the QR code for quick access to additional resources:  
<https://www.waiteparkchurch.org/whoweare>



## **Obey**

- We desire to be a people who choose faithfulness and obedience to a loving and trustworthy God who desires good for all people including ourselves.
  
- What are you doing today that is a reflection of your will and not God's will?
  
- What steps are you taking today to be Christ-like in your obedience?
  
- In what areas of your life do you have the most difficulty obeying God?

## //PRACTICE //

Through prayer, our desires begin to align with God's desires. We gradually learn to see the world from God's perspective. Select one of these prayer practices below for this week.

- *Intergenerational Prayer and Communion Night:* Bring your families to share in Communion together as a church family on Wednesday, October 4th at 7:00 pm. It is a great opportunity to learn more about the purpose and meaning of Communion.
- *Hourly Prayer:* Set a reminder for each hour to pray a breath prayer. The breath prayer could be a truth from the Scripture prayer for this week. An example is "Lord, let Your love grow deep roots in my heart to give me strength."
- *Silence/Solitude:* Spend 5 minutes of silence each day this week. Check out videos from Ruth Haley Barton on this practice on our resource page.
- *Create a Daily Prayer Journal:* Create an outline for prayer to cover family, friends, small group, and others in prayer. Layout who or what you

want to make sure to be covered in prayer.

- *Prayer Walk:* Some people connect with God in nature. Take time to go for a prayer walk. Use this opportunity to be praying for your neighbors.

*For Families:* Life is busy, especially with kids. But family prayer doesn't have to be complicated. Take the advice of Deuteronomy 6 and pray with your kids as you go. When you're walking outside, notice the beauty of nature and say out loud, "Thank you, God, for creating such an amazing world." When you're driving in the car to a soccer game, say, "God, help us to show the soccer team your love today." Keeping it simple by bringing God into your everyday conversation as you go makes a difference.

Use the QR code for quick access to additional resources:  
<https://www.waiparkchurch.org/whoware>





## // PRAYER //

"I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is."

~ Ephesians 3:16-18

*Spend time in response to this prayer:*

# WEEK 4 //

## GIVING OURSELVES

### INTRO:

Our consumer society that has effectively convinced us that we are what we consume. We are more valuable when we own the latest brands, the newest technology and eat the finest food. We have been told that “the customer is king” and we can “have it our way.” This attitude even creeps into a me-centered gospel.

Warring against this consumer mindset is the call of Jesus. Jesus certainly does promise us personal salvation. There is great personal benefit when we receive Jesus. But what often gets lost is that when we receive Jesus we are incorporated into a family with a specific call on our lives. Jesus does not align himself with my mission, he calls me to align my life with his.

This week, we’ll take a look at what the Bible says is God’s call on the church and consider how we can align ourselves with that call.

*“And whoever  
does not carry  
their cross  
and follow me  
cannot be my  
disciple.”*

*Luke 14:27*

## DISCUSS // GROUP QUESTIONS

### 1. Debrief on previous Reflect & Practice

**Sections:** Which reflection question challenged you? Why? What practice did you accomplish?

2. Do you agree that American Christians (and churches) tend to be consumeristic? Why or why not?

3. What does it mean to “give yourself” to the mission of Jesus and to his Church? In what ways have you done so?

4. How have you given (or will you give) your talents, time and treasure to the mission of Jesus?

5. Are there ways in which giving yourself has become a craving?

6. How can we identify our own consumeristic tendencies? What are ways we can combat this tendency?

## // REFLECT //

Start your reflection by asking God to give you wisdom, so you can be shaped by Scripture and this community towards faithfulness.

- What is the purpose of our Sunday worship service? What expectations do you have for our Sunday worship services?
  
- Consider a time you experienced conflict or discomfort as part of a community. How did you respond? Did you work through the problem within the community or did you disengage and distance yourself from the community? What values influenced your response?

- Henri Nouwen once observed, "Community is the place where the person you least want to live with always lives." What would be more challenging about being in that kind of community? What would be most rewarding?
- Do you consider yourself generous with your time/talent/treasure? Are you reserved in offering your time/talent/treasures? What would others say about you?
- What fundamental allegiances might need to change for you to align your life with Jesus' calling?

## // PRACTICE //

Our desire to serve is to flow from our relationship with God not out of obligation or human effort. Select one of these service opportunities below and serve from a heart of gratitude for God's gift of grace. Parents, practices with a ✨ next to them are ones that would also work well to try as a family.

- *Visit a Shut-in Person:* Our congregation has several shut-ins; take time to visit or share a meal with those who are often not able to join us for worship. Reach out to the Church office for contact information for these individuals.
- *Write a letter to one of our missionary families.* Check out our resource page for contact details to begin building a relationship with these families. ✨
- *Create a care kit for a homeless person.* Handout the care kit to a person collecting money along the street. ✨
- *Donate to our Benevolence fund.* Our church has a benevolence fund to assist people inside and sometimes outside our congregation when a financial need arises. Donate to this



- benevolence fund on a regular basis to support our church in being generous.
- *Arrive Ministries* serves immigrants and refugees in our community. Here are two of their opportunities:
    - being English tutors through Somali Adult Literacy Training program
    - supporting refugee family through Refugee Life Ministries program
  - *Building relationships with neighbors*: Check out these resources for a guide and practical steps to build these relationships:
    - The Art of Neighboring
    - The Hopeful Neighborhood
  - *Feed My Starving Children*: Pack meals shipped to different parts of the world. Most days there are multiple shifts available throughout the day.  
✱

Use the QR code for quick access to additional resources:  
<https://www.waiteparkchurch.org/howeare>



## // PRAYER //

*"Jesus told them, 'Pray that you will not give in to temptation.' He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.' . . . At last he stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation."*

*~ Luke 22:40-42, 45-46*

*Spend time in response to this prayer:*



# WEEK 5 //

# SHALOM

## INTRO:

If you're following our identity statement closely...

"We are the family of God, called and empowered by God to give ourselves for the glory of God and the good of the world."

...you are probably expecting that this week will focus on the glory of God—and you are right... kind of. You see, it natural for us to divide these next two weeks something like this;

The glory of God = evangelism

The good of the world = good works

The problem is that this artificially separates out evangelism from good works and word from deed in a way that distorts God's goals. So, this week, we'll combat this misunderstanding by exploring the Old Testament foundation for what God wants to accomplish through his Church—Shalom. What you'll find is that Shalom brings "the glory of God and the good of the world" together in a way that cannot be separated.

*“Let your light  
shine before  
others, that  
they may see  
your good  
deeds and  
glorify your  
Father in  
heaven.”*

*Matthew 5:16*

## DISCUSS // GROUP QUESTIONS

### 1. Debrief on previous Reflect & Practice

**Sections:** Which reflection question challenged you? Why? What practice did you accomplish?

2. How does understanding shalom and God's desire to bring restoration inform our lives as the people of God? How well has the whole Church done at living it out?

3. Is it more natural for you to do good deeds without good words (bearing witness to the Gospel) or good words without deeds? Why? What are some ways you might be more intentional about connecting these?

4. What are one or two practices that bring you peace or energy when life is feeling chaotic?
5. Share a story of a time when someone has supported or cared for you in a way that brought peace or restoration.
6. For our reflection and practice this week, each person will lay out the rhythms and practices in their lives. Why is it important to make sure our own lives are aiming towards shalom? How does that impact our ability to help others?

## // REFLECT // RULE INVENTORY

A rule of life is a guide of the practices you do to stay healthy. When healthy, you are in a better position to help others. This week, take time to reflect and identify the practices that help in your pursuit of shalom.

1. Where are you thriving? What are activities or areas that cultivate joy or peace in your life?
  
2. Many of us are already doing activities or practices to stay grounded and healthy. What are those activities? Take an inventory. List everything that comes to mind.
  
3. What are activities or practices that you would like to grow or try? What are hurdles or problems that you desire to overcome? List everything that comes to mind.



4. Pick one or two items from the previous question that would be the most beneficial to cultivate a healthy rhythm for you. What could you stop doing to make room for this growth?

5. Write a plan for those practices that you would like to start. Be as specific as possible. What are you going to do for how long and how often? As you start, be realistic in setting up your plan. An example: plan to have coffee with a friend once a month.

6. Identify one practice from each aspect of shalom that restores, renews or energizes you the most. Focus on these practices to help you build a life of shalom. When you have a day or season that gets overwhelming or feels chaotic, turn to them to ground you. Allow them to refocus you on God rather than your circumstances. For example, a walk in nature could be a way to reset from a hectic day.

## // PRACTICE // RULE OF LIFE

This practice builds on the reflection questions. Let's continue to intentionally create a rhythm in our lives that leads towards shalom, so we can contribute to what God has started to accomplish through our church.

1. Go to the Series Resource Page; using the QR code. Find the Rule of Life Worksheet.
2. Start filling out the sheet by adding in the activities you are already doing from your reflection.
3. Add the one practice you chose to implement into the rhythm of your life. Please be realistic. The goal is to create more shalom or peace in your life.
4. If you have potential future practices you want to save for reference, add these to the bottom of the page.

*For Families:* It's worth considering your family habits and how you communicate the story of God through your everyday rhythms. Use the QR code to access resources by Justin Whitmel Earley including his book, *Habits of the Household*, or his Instagram has quick, easy-to-digest videos.

Use the QR code for quick access to additional resources:  
<https://www.waiteparkchurch.org/whoweare>



## // PRAYER //

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon us,  
for the LORD has anointed us to bring good  
news to the poor. He has sent us to comfort  
the brokenhearted and to proclaim that  
captives will be released and prisoners will  
be freed.*

*To all who mourn, he will give a crown of  
beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead  
of mourning, festive praise instead of  
despair. In their righteousness, they will be  
like great oaks that the LORD has planted  
for his own glory.*

*~ Isaiah 61:1,3 paraphrased*

*Spend time in response to this prayer:*

# WEEK 6 //

## FOR THE GLORY OF GOD & THE GOOD OF THE WORLD

### INTRO:

This is the week we put it all together.

- We are not a social club, we are the Family of God.
- We don't volunteer for a non-profit, we have a calling.
- We don't just try really hard, we are empowered by God.
- We aren't called to consume religious goods, we are called to give ourselves.
- Our goal isn't just evangelism or good works, it's to be agents of God's shalom.

This is the identity of the Church. But how has the Church done this in the past? And just as importantly, how does our local congregation Church live into that identity? And finally, how do you fit? What is your place in the family? In what ways are you empowered by God? How do you seek to be an agent of God's shalom in the world? That is for you to determine.

This week will help you in that task.

*"And Jesus  
said to her,  
"Daughter,  
your faith has  
made you well.  
Go in peace.  
Your suffering is  
over."*

*Mark 5:34*

## DISCUSS // GROUP QUESTIONS

### 1. Debrief on previous Reflect & Practice

**Sections:** Which reflection question challenged you? Why? What practice did you accomplish?

2. Why is it important for the people of God to unite in serving together? How well does our church serve beyond our church family?

3. How well does our church connect good deeds with good words? Do we naturally navigate towards one or the other? Why?

4. Which areas from our identity statement are we as Waite Park Church the best at living out?

5. In which areas are we falling short?

6. Review the Practices for this week. Which one would you vote to do as a small group? How could this be an opportunity for your group to serve and do good regularly?

Take a few minutes in your small group to give us feedback on this Focus Season. Use the QR code for access to the survey.



## // REFLECT //

Start your reflection by asking God to give you wisdom, so you can be shaped by Scripture and this community towards faithfulness.

1. Which part of our identity statement did you most resonate with?

2. Which part has been most challenging for you?



3. What will require the greatest amount of change for you?

4. How will you help our church live out this as our identity?

Take a few minutes to give us feedback on this Focus Season. Use the QR code for access to the survey.



## // PRACTICE //

When we partner together, we unite our efforts to invest in creating ripples of good in various parts of our community and church family. As a small group, select one of these service opportunities to invest in on a regular basis together. Parents, practices with a ✨ next to them are ones that would also work well to try as a family.

- *Immigrant Connection*: Our site office will be opening soon. We want to be able to meet some of the other needs these families might have settling and adjusting to our community and culture. One way you can help is by joining our wrap around care team.
- *Together For Good* supports families in crisis with respite care for the single parents and friendships for these parents. Use QR code to for access to their website. ✨
- *Church Cleaning Team*: One crucial behind the scenes way to serve is on a cleaning team. Each team serves for a couple hours every five weeks to clean the building. Reach out to the Office for more details on this opportunity. ✨

- *Adopt a Missionary Family:* Our church supports several missionary families. A small group could build a relationship with one of our missionary families to write letters or send care packages to the family. Reach out to the Office to connect with our missions committee. ✨
- *Feed My Starving Children Mission Trip:* Each November, our kids invite adults from our church family to join them as they serve packing food for kids around the world. ✨

Use the QR code for quick access to additional resources:  
<https://www.waiteparkchurch.org/whoweare>



## // PRAYER //

*We are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, so that we may declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once we were not a people, but now we are the people of God; once we had not received mercy, but now we have received mercy.*

*We desire to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against our soul. Give us strength to live such good lives among the world that, though they accuse us of doing wrong, they may see our good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

*~ 1 Peter 2:9-12, paraphrased*

*Spend time in response to this prayer:*







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