

ephesians

MANY
MADE
ONE

HOMEchurch

If you are a musical family feel free to start with some singing together (the final page includes some instructions and suggestions). If you are not a singing family feel free to “jump right in”. ☺ **Suggestions for families with younger children are printed in BLUE.**

For today’s HOMEchurch I’d like to introduce you to Lectio Divina. Properly prepared this whole exercise should take about 30-45 minutes

Lectio Divina (Latin, lek-see-o de-vee-na) - Spiritual Reading

A Lectio Divina is an ancient way of reading and meditating on scripture. Each person should have a piece of paper (or something on which to write/draw) and a pen or pencil. You should notice a read-reflect-respond rhythm as you go along.

You can assign one person to do all the reading, or three people (one person for each section). Encourage the group to make themselves comfortable, try to remove any distractions and concentrate on listening. For some people that might mean closing their eyes, putting their head down, gazing out a window, lying on the couch or floor... Whatever it takes for you to **really** listen. **Listening** for God and to God is the goal.

There will be three opportunities for you to reflect and then to share. You may wish to have your Bible open for the reflection/sharing portions but since the readings involve different translations following along might actually be more of a distraction.

I’ve included complete readings in various translations below – but feel free to substitute your own translations if you prefer.

We prepare....

LISTENING

Each person should be encouraged to listen for a single word, thought or line which stands out for them as the passage is read. Don’t try to figure out why it stands out... don’t start trying to unpack the Word. We miss God often because we are too quick to get to a destination... He is infinitely more concerned with the journey...

For the first couple readings simply listen for one word, phrase, thought that sticks in your mind as the passage is read.

FOR GROUPS WITH CHILDREN: Listen for and draw a picture of each part of the armour you hear as the passage is read.

6:10-18

Write it down (or draw a picture) when it stands out for you. After we will each sit in silence with our word for a minute or two of silence. (Families with younger children might sit for 15-20 seconds)

First Reading (*New International Version* and *The Message*)

Ephesians 6:10–18 (NIV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹

⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:10–18 (The Message)

¹⁰ ... God is strong, and He wants you strong.

¹¹ So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials.

And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the devil throws your way.

¹² This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the devil and all his angels.

¹³ Be prepared.

You're up against far more than you can handle on your own.

Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet.

¹⁴ Truth, righteousness, ¹⁵ peace, ¹⁶ faith, ¹⁷ and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them.

You'll need them throughout your life.

God's Word is an *indispensable* weapon.

¹⁸ In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare.

Pray hard and long.

Pray for your brothers and sisters.

Keep your eyes open.

Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

Silence (1-2")

Take a minute or two of silence and allow each person to reflect on the word, phrase or picture that stood out for them as the passage was read.

Sharing Aloud

Each person shares with the group the word or phrase that stood out for them. Do not try to explain why the word/phrase stood out for you. Simply state the word or phrase with **no elaboration**. (e.g. "pray" or "scheme" or "armour of God")

GROUPS WITH CHILDREN: Which piece of the armour is your favourite?

What the Spirit is saying to me...

This time as the passage is read God is going to begin to show you where that verse, word, phrase touches your life today. For some the connection is already as clear as day... some of you may need to sit with it a little longer.

The question you are seeking to answer is: **“Why might this word, phrase, verse, truth have stood out for me?”**

LISTENING: Second Reading (*Lexham English Bible*)

Once again the reader should read slowly.

Ephesians 6:10–18 (LEB)

¹⁰ Finally, become strong in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,

¹² because our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

¹³ Because of this, take up the full armor of God, in order that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, girding your waist with truth, and putting on the breastplate of righteousness,

¹⁵ and binding *shoes* under your feet with the preparation of the good news of peace,

¹⁶ in everything taking up the shield of faith, with which you are able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one,

¹⁷ and receive the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

¹⁸ with all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the Spirit, and to this *end* being alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints,

Silence (2-3")

Reflect on "Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?" This word which you have written... What relationship, situation, conflict, joy does this passage connect with in your life?

Write that down...

Reflection

Give each person the opportunity to share where/how they believe their word, phrase or verse connects with their life – eg. my future, my family, finances, study...

Three things of note:

1. ***You don't need to share details...*** God knows –
2. You can pass if you wish.
3. Don't try to get spiritual! "I don't know." Is a perfectly valid answer!

FOR GROUPS WITH CHILDREN:

Why do you think that word/piece of the armour stood out for you?

What would you do with it if you had that piece of the armour?

What God invites me to do...

LISTENING: Third Reading (*English Standard Version*)

As before – read the passage slowly. There is no need to rush through it. Allow God to use the words to speak to you.

Ephesians 6:10–18 (ESV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers,
against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God,
that you may be able to withstand in the evil day,
and having done all, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth,
and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the
gospel of peace.

¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can
extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the
saints,

Silence (2-3”)

Take a few moments of silence and reflect on the following question: When you think of that word or phrase or verse or truth is there anything that you think God might be inviting you to do?

Sharing Aloud

Once again you are free to “pass” or to answer “I don’t know.”

What do you think God may have said to you during our time?

Once everyone has had an opportunity to share lead, or enter into, a time of prayer.

Prayer

HOMEchurch SUGGESTIONS

- Set a specific time, and a specific duration. Let everyone know for example, “We’re going to meet at 930am on Sunday and take 30 minutes... or 45 minutes in HOMEchurch.”

HINTS...

- If this is your family’s first time doing something like this trying to plan 30 minutes will probably be better than trying to pull of an hour and a half
- Be as faithful to your stated time/duration as you possibly can. We all know “life happens” but do your best to stick to your timeframes. Our first family **HOMEchurch** was a result of a major snowstorm – but was so much fun our kids would ask for one from time to time.
- Make it age/family specific. If you don’t have any singers in your household don’t force everyone to sing for 25 minutes. If you have children in the group – I’ve tried to include exercises that might connect with your children – but you know your children best. I’ve included some suggested videos as a place to start – **DO NOT use them all..** just pick one that you think might work for the people in your household
- As the leader, do a little advance work. Nothing is worse than a group being led by someone who is “winging it”. (see Luke 6:39 ☺)

POSSIBLE VIDEO OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN.

Parents, **please preview** the videos first to see what might work for your children. Again, unless you have really keen children you should probably only plan to use one... maybe two of the following.

WARNING: I’m not a big fan of what YouTube has started doing with dropping ads into their videos, but I think these are each short enough that if you pick one you should be able to get through it without an ad-interruption.

Music

For parents who are looking for a song on the Armour of God to start/end their HOMEchurch time with their children. CLICK the link to watch the video.

<https://youtu.be/M3FqKD98FiQ> - This is a lyric video of a song about the Armour of God produced by KidSpring Children’s Music.

<https://youtu.be/kzFd7u029UY> - This animated music video is targeted at younger children. ...kudos for working “metaphorical” and “thwart” into a children’s song ☺

EDM is not my thing but hey if it’s your “cup of tea” ☺ ... <https://youtu.be/PZ5vIRy0cxw>

6:10-18

Lessons

Billed as a “Sunday School lesson for kids” Douglas (a puppet) talks about the importance of the Armour of God (parents be prepared to explain the word ‘metaphorical’ to your kids) - <https://youtu.be/pR6PrOPJ7Z4>

Produced by Crossroads Kids Club from their “God’s Story” series this one is a little older. I call it “the new flannelgraph 🕊️”. https://youtu.be/o7eC-W_XNyw

Produced by Bible Stories for Toddlers this video is a rhyming, animated, walk through the Armour of God - <https://youtu.be/3JzPkPeaWAM>

Produced by the folks at Superbook this video includes a short sketch leading into a dance video hosted by a couple of teens - <https://youtu.be/9G5ChnFZy4M>