



Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passages.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Slowly Read the Following Passages

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Psalm 133:1

1 How good and pleasant it is when brothers can live together!

Acts 4:32

32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common.

Romans 8:15-17

15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father!" **16** The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, **17** and if children, also heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ-seeing that we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Ephesians 3:8-10

8 This grace was given to me-the least of all the saints!-to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of the Messiah, **9** and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things. **10** This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens.

1 Cor 12:4-11

4 Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** There are different ministries, but the same Lord. **6** And there are different activities, but the same God is active in everyone and everything. **7** A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person to produce what is beneficial: **8** to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, **9** to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit, **10** to another, the performing of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another, distinguishing between spirits, to another, different kinds of languages, to another, interpretation of languages. **11** But one and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each one as He wills.

Colossians 3:12-17

12 Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, **13** accepting one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so also you must forgive. **14** Above all, put on love-the perfect bond of unity. **15** And let the peace of the Messiah, to which you were also called in one body, control your hearts. Be thankful. **16** Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly among you, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Thoughts to Ponder - Making Room for the Church

Read the short essay from Brandon Smith - <https://hereadstruth.com/2019/05/16/making-room-for-the-church/>

This past summer, a college student stayed with us for a few weeks. It was truly a great experience, and when he left, we were sad to see him go. But his time with us was a reminder of what hospitality really looks like. When not at work, he was with us all day, every day. We didn't have as much private time as a family. We spent more money on groceries. And I once had to run downstairs at five in the morning because he'd accidentally set off our home alarm.

Making room for anyone is tough because, as we learned with this college student we hosted, we really like our personal space and comfort. But biblical hospitality is about more than sharing a meal or inviting friends over. It is the work of making room in our lives for others. True hospitality is a posture of charity toward the poor, of welcome toward the displaced, and of humility and gentleness toward the hurting.

When we think of making room for others in our lives, we should remember that the most important community we have is the one we have with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Through Jesus, we've been grafted into a family that supersedes our earthly families. Christ's blood outlasts the blood you share with your mother or brother. So, our closest community should be our brothers and sisters in Christ, with whom we gather regularly in our local church.

In our culture, it's easy to treat the most important things in life like a buffet. We pick and choose what we want and what makes us happy; we don't commit to anything we don't want on our plate. But to make room for other Christians, we have to partake in the whole spread. Most of us make plenty of time for ourselves, our friends, and our family, but are we willing to make room for our local church family?

Acts 4 describes the early church this way: "Now the entire group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common" (v.32). Here, "everything in common" means that they shared everything, not just a hobby or two. In other words, the early church held the things of this world loosely so that none of the brothers and sisters would go without. We are called to do the same. We are joined together by Christ with people who are not always like us, who don't share our interests, and whose flaws or idiosyncrasies can sometimes drive us up the wall. But these divisions are superficial. In the Church, we are one body, the body of Christ. And so, while living in biblical community can sometimes be tough, it is also the healthiest way to live and essential to following our Savior. After all, just as He died for us, He also died for the person in the pew next to you. We are called to love those Jesus loves.

Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why does Scripture urge us to welcome the Church?
2. Is there a specific person or group of people in the Church whom you struggle to welcome? Think of their name(s) and write it down.

Close in Prayer:

Pray for this person/group. Ask God to give you a soft heart toward this person or group, and courage to make room for them in your life.