



## Family Worship June 25, 2017

### Preparation for Worship

Gather in a quiet place, free of distraction (put silenced cellphones in another room)

Decide who will lead the various parts. A family worship experience should involve everyone, *especially* children! This guide can be adapted by families of 1 or 2 people. Here are the parts:

- Reading the Call to Worship
- Reading the Scripture
- Reading the Pastor's Devotional and Our Offering to God sections
- Leading the Prayer (your own words, from notes)
- Playing the songs on a laptop, tablet, or phone (Just listen to the songs if you prefer not to sing☺) You can copy and paste the links or find them with Google.

Discuss who and what you should include in your prayer. In addition to people within the church family, also discuss friends, co-workers, and neighbors for whom you want to pray. Consider what local, national, or international concern you should include (Whoever is to lead the prayer can take notes—it's OK to look at notes when praying). A simple way to pray is to go by ACTS:

**Adoration:** giving God praise by naming God's beautiful qualities (Almighty, loving, etc.)

**Confession:** pausing for a minute for everyone to acknowledge their sin silently & privately

**Thanksgiving:** naming specific ways God has provided for needs or has answered prayers

**Supplication:** ask God to help or provide for specific people or situations

### Suggested Order of Worship

#### Call to Worship

Psalm 147:1-11

#### Song of Praise

*I'm Trading My Sorrows*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KsfwvpcQhY>

#### Scripture

Acts 8:26-40

**Pastor's Devotional** (on next page)

#### Our Offering to God

When we hear the word "offering," we naturally think of giving money to finance God's work. We also think of the time that we volunteer to bless other people. Yet our "offering" also includes how we choose to live as "sent people" in the places where we live, work, and play.

- Has a disappointment or hardship ever put you in a place or a situation where you found yourself around people that you wouldn't ordinarily know well?
- If this hasn't yet happened to you, how might it happen?
- How might the Lord use such situations to bless others and demonstrate your faith?

**Prayer** (from your notes)

**Song of Faith** (optional)

"Oceans, Where Feet May Fail"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBJJJkiRukY>

## Pastor's Devotional Acts 8:26-40

At the end of Chapter 7, the Book of Acts changes dramatically in its tone. For the first six chapters, the Holy Spirit's power enabled the disciples to share the message of Jesus with thousands of people without much trouble. But after making his courageous speech before the Sanhedrin (Jewish leadership council), like Jesus, Stephen was murdered—in his case, by stoning. His death set off a wave of suffering, for “on that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria” (8:1). Remarkably, “those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.” (8:4). Isn't it amazing that though talking about Jesus got them in trouble, the disciples continued to proclaim him, even as refugees!

While just north of Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria was not a comfortable place for orthodox Jews to travel. After the Samaritans' ancestors inter-married with Assyrians, though mixed pagan beliefs into Judaism. Jews were alienated from Samaritans. Yet before his ascension into heaven, Jesus predicted that when his disciples received “power” from the Holy Spirit, they “would be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria...” (1:8). Perhaps Phillip had planned to go to Samaria eventually. But after Stephen's death, Phillip also fled for his life; he “went down (Jerusalem is on high plateau) to a city in Samaria” (8:5). Peter and John also “preached the gospel in many Samaritan villages” (8:25).

Here is a principle of great relevance for us. Usually the Holy Spirit leads us to focus on sharing Jesus in places where we are most capable and comfortable—our immediate-area “Jerusalem;” or our not-far-away “Judea.” But occasionally we are called to advance God's mission in our “Samaria” (not far away, yet an awkward cultural fit). Some disciples discern that the Spirit is leading them to volunteer to go to their Samaria. Other times the Spirit sends believers by allowing suffering to drive them into their Samaria. When Jim Cobb was treated several years ago for a benign but recurring brain tumor in Gainesville, he and Roz spent months relating with strangers at the hospital's hospitality house. No one had much in common with each other, except their shared experience of interruption and uncertainty. Yet this difficult season gave the Cobbs the opportunity to serve others and share their faith as they provided transportation and shared meals.

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch reminds us that sometimes “going to Samaria” is a Spirit-led choice. After he learned to minister to the Samaritans, an angel provided the Lord's next assignment: “Go south to the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (8:26). There he met a man completely different from himself—different racially (Ethiopian), different socio-economic class (important official in charge of queen's treasury), and different gender identity (eunuch). The only thing that they had in common was that this man had interest in the Jewish faith and curiosity about the scriptures, so “the Spirit told Philip, ‘Go near to that chariot and stay near to it.’” Perhaps Philip felt awkward about starting a conversation with a person so different from himself. But the moment he recognized phrases from the Book of Isaiah, the Spirit led him to ask, “Do you know what you are reading?” Within a few minutes, this God-appointed encounter ended in the eunuch's baptism, and Philip miraculously appearing elsewhere.

Unless the Spirit tells us differently, we are called to go and stay near to people with whom we share common space and a common culture. Increasingly our neighborhoods are as much mission fields as far-away places like India. Why go somewhere else when the people near us need to see the Kingdom of God demonstrated and experience our living Lord? Yet as we become comfortable and capable as missional disciples, we may find ourselves sent to some form of Samaria. Perhaps some hardship will put you in a Samaria against your will. Or maybe you'll discern that the Spirit is calling you to focus on being a missionary in a more challenging context. Either way, being a witness in Samaria is a great opportunity to discover the power of the Holy Spirit to do what you can't do on your own!