



*Practices & Guide for MCs*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Using This guide As a MC	3
MC Practice #1 - Mission	4
MC Practice #2 - Thankfulness	6
Mc Practice #3 - Advancing the gospel	7
MC Practice #4 - Being	9
MC Practice #5 - Reminding	10

## USING THIS GUIDE AS A MC

### BIBLE DOING NOT DISCUSSING

The Missional Community guides are more like outlines of how to spend your time together than discussion questions. In fact, there are very few discussion questions. What we really want to get at is *experiencing the passage in obedience*. For example, Philippians 1:3-11 is a lot about Paul's thankfulness for the believers in Philippi and so on that week your missional community will give attention to giving thanks for each person through an intentional experience.

### YOU'VE GOT FREEDOM AND PLANNING TO DO

We've also decided to give you, as an MC Leaders, space to navigate your schedule and your planning. We did this by creating five intentional practices or liturgies for your community to do during our study on Philippians between Labor Day and Thanksgiving. Since there are 12 weeks during the Philippians study, sit down with your other leaders and map out when and where you'll practice these five practices and when you could plan the practices below.

Our only strong encouragement is to do **practice 1** in the beginning of September to set-up the rest of the practices.

### WHAT DO WE DO THE OTHER TIMES?

We want to encourage you to think about other practices that could really help your community live out the realities of the gospel within your group. Here are a few ideas:

- **Serve** Could be in a free meal kitchen, could be making little gifts for people in your building or neighborhood, or it could be
- **Pray.** Spend time prayer walking or praying for those around you, co-workers, etc.
- **Play.** Have fun together in such a way you can include other people outside your community.
- **Invite.** Candypalooza will happen during this study. Spend time inviting people to that could be as simple as sitting around texting friends the invite and then praying for those you invited.

# MC PRACTICE #1 - MISSION

The practice of thinking about mission

## WELCOME PEOPLE

Paul says to greet one another with a “holy kiss” and to embrace one another. I know physical touch isn’t for everyone, but imagine Kingdom Come and the joy and excitement as each saint walks into the City of Heaven. Every community gathering is an appetizer of that moment. So gather and greet with joy.

## DURING YOUR “FOCUSED TIME”

Conversation about the radical nature of God’s mission directed and sustained by the Power of the Holy Spirit, taking place in hospitality, birthed out of chaotic choices we wouldn’t choose, fueled by worship.

Let’s have a conversation about the people God has brought into our lives through the people who started the church in Philippi.

- Who the Lydias and her household around us? Lydias are people embedded in the community through work, government, or education who are attentive and even seeking God. Maybe they’re people who grew up in a religious environment and “fear God” but don’t know Jesus and the gospel.
- Who are the jailers? The jailer was immersed in the Roman Empire and a servant to it though it seems his participation is built on fear. Connecting to our context, this would be people entrenched in the cultural drivers of our city though may also be feeling weary from it, discouraged by it, or exhausted by it.
- Who are the “slave girls”? She was used and manipulated by powers over her. She was not viewed as a person, she was viewed as an object to use. Who are the people in our city that are used without belonging?
- How could they be included or catch a glimpse of the joy of the good news of the gospel?
- What if they were included in this group? What would have to happen (logistically, relationally, spiritually)?

- How can this community become a hospitable and welcoming place?
- Also, how can we “receive” the hospitality of the neighborhood and accept invitations to the spaces, events, and places our neighborhood hosts?

## **SHARING THE PLAN**

For the next several months we’re going to focus on inviting people into this community space. We’re excited to see how that will turn out. We’re going to take this input and share a plan with everyone this week.

## **PRAYER TO END**

Have a few people pray for what God will do in us and through as we are God’s mission and as we’re on God’s mission.

## **MC PRACTICE #2 - THANKFULNESS**

The practice of thankfulness for each person and the prayers for love for each one.

### **WELCOME WITH AFFECTION**

Hugs, High Fives, Excitement to see each person that comes in.

### **BEFORE THE MEAL/WHEN MOST PEOPLE ARE TOGETHER**

Paul says: “I thank God every time I remember you...”

How are we thankful for one another?

- Share about how you’re thankful for one other person in the room.
- As a leader, be on the lookout for the people not shared about.

### **TOASTS AT THE END/WRAP UP ENCOURAGEMENT**

Paul prays: “Love may abound more and more with knowledge and understanding...”

What kind of knowledge and understanding of love do you hope for in others?

As a leader, offer a final toast or exhortation for how you long to see the people in the group understand just how much they are loved. Be as specific and authentic as you feel you can be.

### **PRAYER TO END**

A leader prays for everyone there to know how much they are loved, how important they are to the whole community, and how much their entire lives matter to God.

## MC PRACTICE #3 - ADVANCING THE GOSPEL

The practice of seeing God use all of our lives to advance the gospel of grace into the world

### WELCOME WITH AFFECTION

Hugs, High Fives, Excitement to see each person that comes in.

### BEFORE THE MEAL/WHEN MOST PEOPLE ARE TOGETHER

Paul says: “Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel”. He describes how the circumstance of his chaotic life and literal trials have been used to advance the gospel—specifically the reality of Jesus being more clear to people around him, and the confidence and courage he’s grown in through he entire ordeal.

The same is true for our lives...even when its hard to see. That’s why we need each other to see for us and remind us of how God is at work through our lives.

**The gospel is the good news that Jesus—through his life, death, and resurrection—has defeated sin, death, and evil and is now making all things new—even us! The gospel advances anytime this message is made known or clear to others.**

Reflect. How is the gospel going forward through the lives and circumstances of the group?

Take turns sharing how you’re seeing the gospel advance through the simple, the hard, and the rhythms of each persons life. You can also share how their participation in God’s mission is impacting, encouraging, or challenging you.

For example: *“Gloria, over the last few months you’ve really suffered at work with bosses and challenges, but I’ve seen you grow in a steady patience and kindness to even pray for those coworkers, that’s the mission of God moving forward in you and through you!”*

As a leader, be on the lookout for the people not shared about.

## **TOASTS AT THE END/WRAP UP ENCOURAGEMENT**

Paul observes: “Because of my chains others have grown confident and become fearless”, meaning we’re all partners in this together. We all get to participate.

Have a leader offer a small encouragement in how the group is partnering together to see God work through them and how each person is a participant.

## **PRAYER TO END**

Pray together for God to give us a sense of joy in any tiny bit of clarity or understanding that is gained about Jesus.



## MC PRACTICE #4 - BEING

The practice of seeing Christ be a thrilling reward in life and in death through boasting in Jesus' work. We're going to do this by making space to simply *be* together.

### SIMPLE BUT INTENTIONAL MEAL

Gather together around a charcuterie board, have someone bring cheese, another wine, another bread, another meat, etc. Sit outside and enjoy one another.

### BEFORE THE MEAL/WHEN MOST PEOPLE ARE TOGETHER

Share the vision for the night.

The Danish have a practice called Hygge. It's a gather of friends and family around the table, with games, questions, lots of time. Hygge is filled with laughter, conversation, and warmth of friendship. We think this is a fancy way of saying fellowship: the joy of being together. The early church called this practice: "love feasts."

Why is it a joy? Because to be alive together means Christ still has something for us in these relationship. Something to give and something to receive.

*Ideas:*

- Have games to play as a group
- Have conversation starters/questions to get to know each other better or just know each other better in this moment.
- Invite friends and neighbors into this.

### TOASTS AT THE END/WRAP UP ENCOURAGEMENT

End the night by having someone carefully reading Philippians 1:18b-26

### PRAYER TO END

Pray for rejoicing to resound throughout life together.

## MC PRACTICE #5 - REMINDING

The practice of reminding each other what is better. How knowing Jesus and the power of his resurrection is better than anything else in this life.

### WELCOME WITH AFFECTION

Hugs, High Fives, Excitement to see each person that comes in.

### DURING THE MEAL

Paul says that he considers all the great things he has done and achieved in his life something you can throw away compared to knowing Jesus. This is his ambition and his aim. What's helpful about it is he's declaring the gospel from a less to a greater using his own life. For example he's saying, "It was great to be a Hebrew and have that heritage, but being a child of God and the inheritance of the kingdom is even better!"

This is a great and natural way to share the gospel and make its value clear for others. You can practice giving different toasts as a group to the goodness of Jesus for yourself.

For example: *"It's so good to live in this city, but it's even sweeter and better to be alive with Jesus."* Or, *"My career is really good and I love the work I get to do, but I God's work in my own heart is even better!"* Or, *"Being a parent is a true blessing, But being a child of God is something I can't even fathom it's so good."*

As a leader, don't stress if not everyone shares and encourage people they can share multiple times.

### WRAP UP ENCOURAGEMENT

Read this encouragement from Paul in Philippians 3:7-11.

*But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

## **PRAYER TO END**

Pray together that God would give you all a sense of how knowing Christ is best thing.