



Are We There Yet: Patience OPENING PRAYER

Invite a member of the group to lead prayer.

Read Luke 2:22-35.

“When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord’), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.’ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.’ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’”

WC ENCOUNTER GROUPS CURRICULUM

WEEK FOUR: PATIENCE

We are living in a world that provides instant gratification from phones that we hold in the palms of our hands. Via the command of our voice, Alexa and Google grant our requests. From our smart TVs and streaming devices, we can order movies on demand rather than waiting in long lines at a movie store. The drive-thru window is not fast enough, so now we avoid the wait, and have it delivered to our doors. As much as we try to avoid it, waiting is still part of the journey of life. What we seem to lack is patience.

Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple according to the Law, but it was the Holy Spirit that led Simeon to the Temple to see Jesus. Simeon, who had waited all his life for this moment, came face to face with the child that would change everything and bring the fulfillment of God's promise, the restoration of Israel. Simeon demonstrated patience.

Simeon knew what God promised and Simeon trusted that God would make good on the promise. My friends, if we place our complete trust in God and we believe that God is going to make good on that promise, then there is no need to become weighed down with worry or fear. We can wait patiently knowing that God is going to deliver.

Before the beginning of this summer, I made a promise to my children. I promised them that every Friday, on my off day, we would have Daddy Funday. So, I printed out a blank calendar, and I asked Rj, our six year old, and Izzy, our three year old, to tell me where they would like to go. Of course, Rj gave a rapid-fire response of Trampoline Park, Perot Museum, the Fort Worth Museum, Fort Worth Zoo; while Izzy added Chuck E. Cheese, and my wife later added the Frank Kent Dream Park at Trinity Park, and I added the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge.

During that first week, every day leading up to Funday, Izzy would ask is it Funday yet? I would say no - she would respond by crying. My baby girl lacked patience. On the way to our events, the children asked are we there yet? They didn't want to wait. However, as the summer went on, they developed more and more patience. They learned how to wait well. They learned to wait on the fulfillment of the promise. It is a struggle that all of God's children have in common. However, my friends, we don't wait alone. The Holy Spirit is our companion. The Holy Spirit rested on Simeon and when the Holy Spirit rests on us, we can rest good at night knowing that God is with us.

GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Share where you've seen God at work in your life this week.

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Define patience in your own words.

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How do the previous virtues (gentleness, self control, and meekness) of this series play into our pursuit of patience?

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What gets in the way of patience?

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What was the most impactful thing from this sermon series for you?

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How have the comforts of life trained patience out of us?

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PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Please go around the group and have each person share a praise for this week and a prayer request/concern.

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CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer lead closing prayer: asking for prayer concerns and lifting up the needs of the group.

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WEEK FOUR

Supplies:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Sand timer or kitchen timer

WELCOMING GOD:

Gather together, and welcome God into this time and space through the lighting of a candle. Take this moment to pause briefly and sit quietly in this light for a few moments, allowing time for everyone to relax their body, mind, and spirit for this time. In these moments, the invitation is to become aware of God's presence with and amongst you as a family.

SHARING WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER:

Say: "If anything is on our minds that makes it difficult for us to focus, let's share it now and then let it go."

- Whoever leads this portion might share what is on his or her mind to model this. Give time for each person to respond. When everyone has responded that would like to, invite everyone to place their hands out and lift them up as we give these distractions to God.

OR you can invite the family to pray together as one person leads, saying the following:

"Dear Loving God, The One who knows our hearts, celebrates our victories, grieves with us during our losses, and gives us the strength to overcome our challenges. Please help us to let go of the distractions we name now, so that we can openly share with our family and may encounter you in a special way today. Our distractions are... (let there be silence here, so everyone has an opportunity to name aloud what is distracting them). In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen."

ENCOUNTERING GOD:

Say: "This week in church, we talked about patience. Try to remember what we heard last Sunday as we read today's Bible verses..."

- Take turns reading the Scripture or have a different family member read the Scripture each week.
- Read Luke 2:22-35.
 - Scripture is available on front page, or feel free to read your own Bible's version.

ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

Say: "Simeon's one dream was to see the 'consolation of Israel' - the one who would bring peace to the people of Israel and all the world. He waited all his life for this dream to come true, and he was an old man when he saw that dream come true. When he met Jesus, he knew this was the One for whom he was waiting. In life, we wait for many things! For instance, we must wait until this timer ends to finish our conversation today!"

Activity: Invite every family member to sit quietly for the next minute (which can be marked either by flipping the sand timer over, or by setting the kitchen timer/cell phone timer to one minute). When the time ends, everyone can heave a loud sigh of relief!

Discussion Questions

- How did you feel while waiting for the timer to end?
- What are some things - silly and serious - that we have to wait for in life?
- Simeon's dream was something he waited his whole life for! Is there a dream in your life that you would wait that long to see come true? If so, what is it?
- What makes you want to give up or quit when you are waiting?
- What are some things we can do to help us wait patiently?

Say: "God always answers us - no matter how long we have to wait. We can have hope in knowing that God answers us and desires good things for us. God may not answer in the way we expect (I wonder if Simeon expected a baby!), but God always answers us, and we can have hope in that!"

ENCOUNTERING GOD TOGETHER:

Say: "May we pray together as a family..."

Let us share our prayers for the world: for our country and leaders, for other countries and their leaders...

Let us share our prayers for the church, ministers, and spiritual leaders...

Let us share our prayers for our teachers, first responders, friends, and others in the community...

Let us share our prayers for our family and our own specific needs..."

If you would like to record the people for whom you pray, use the next few lines to do so:

*You can also record these requests in a family prayer journal if you are using one.

ENCOUNTERING TRANSFORMATION TOGETHER:

Pray aloud together:

God, we welcomed you here and read Your Word,
we prayed and we spent time with you,
we rested in your love for us,
and we did this all together.

Now, we promise to love one another and others as you love us.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

BLESSING ONE ANOTHER FOR OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WORLD:

Invite family members to bless one another using any of the examples below or their own blessings.

Examples:

- "I love you. God loves you. I pray God blesses you."
- "God loves you exactly like you are—and so do I."
- "I love the gifts God has given you and how you bless the world with them."

DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Please answer these during your personal devotional time at the end of the day or do it as a couple or family.

Where have you seen God today? For the children, we say, "what made you happy today?"

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What broke your heart or made you sad today?

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What good thing did you do for someone else today?

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What are you thankful for today?

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