

## PRAYER & FASTING GUIDE

Wednesday, August 4th

Today's prayer guide was written by Andrew Smith, our Marathon campus pastor.

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*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

### Philippians 4:4-7

As we pray and fast today as a church family I want to invite you into a passage of scripture you might already be familiar with. It's one of those passages that can sometimes get plucked out and slapped on a bumper sticker — but it is so rich with invitation for life in God.

The apostle Paul is writing to a group of believers he dearly loves and reminding them of a few practices that will help them stay grounded in God's peace. Paul himself, as he writes these words from prison, is familiar with the reality that life is filled with hardship and heartache. He understands how important it is to be armed for those moments **when** they come your way.

I'm not sure where you find yourself today, or what your week has been like, but I felt the need to remind us that we should actually expect attacks on our peace and joy. As friends of God, we have nothing to be afraid of, but there are certain things we need to be aware of because there is power in expectation. So, when those moments of attack come, and maybe you're in the midst of one right now — you can quickly turn to the words of God like we see here in Philippians to remain in the peace of God — which is our birth right as believers.

The first thing Paul says, and he actually repeats himself, is to “rejoice in the Lord, always.” I'm going to be real honest with you... before studying this more in depth I always associated this verse with a more physical, outward expression of praise to God. And although that can be a part of rejoicing, what Paul is actually saying here when he says to rejoice in the lord — is to “delight in God's grace.” To literally experience God's grace, to be conscious and glad for His grace in your life. It's an invitation to **delight in God** — to enjoy life with God. What does it look like to take delight in something? You think about it, you savor it, you soak it up.

Then, we see this reminder that **God is near**. Maybe you needed to hear that one thing today, and be reminded of that truth as you pray — God is near. He hears you. He draws near to you as you draw near to him.

And it's from this place of delighting in God, knowing that he is near, we can then **hand over our anxieties** or worries to him through prayer. Do you see how these begin to build on one another? And as we give him our **specific requests**, this amazing exchange happens — we give him our anxieties and he gives us his peace — a peace that transcends all understanding. So today, I invite us to live into these words from our brother Paul.



## REFLECT & PRAY

- **Rejoice in the Lord** — Take some time today to really recount and sit in all the places you have experienced the grace of God in your life. Write them down. Meditate on them. Enjoy the reality that you have a forgiven life with God.
- **Focus on God's Nearness** — As you pray today, intentionally think about God being near and close. Pray as though He is sitting beside you — like you are enjoying the company of a good friend.
- **Be Thankful** — Gratitude is a powerful antidote to anxiety. Take some time today to write down the things you are grateful for in God.
- **Present Your Requests to God** — Be specific with your prayers. I love this reminder from Paul, that as we pray to not utter empty words, but to actually ask God for what we need.

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For more resources and ideas of how to engage in this season, visit [ethoschurch.org/connect](https://ethoschurch.org/connect).