



Devotional Guide for April 5, 2020

In times like these, when anxiety runs high, it's helpful for us to create some rhythms to keep us centered. That's one reason gathering together as the church is such an important weekly routine for so many of us. Unfortunately right now, we can't gather. But we can do the next best thing: to stay connected in community, even if it's in our homes.

We are gathering 'virtually' in various ways throughout the week, including on Sunday mornings for a live service. This devotional guide is intended to help you take what we do on Sundays and intentionally bring it into your homes and make it personal. Please use it and change it in the way you find to be most helpful.

Saturday Night: Family Devotional

Plan a time to gather together with those in your home, or virtually with others over Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, or Google Hangouts.

- Turn the lights down and light a candle. *If you have children in the home, invite them to help with this.*
- Have someone pray this prayer (or one like it) aloud: "God, you are the King of the Universe. You spoke into the darkness and created the light. Jesus, you are the Word. All things were created through you, and without you nothing was made that is made. You are the light of the world. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Spirit, shine your light into our hearts so that we can see Jesus for who He is. We come and we worship you together with Your people. Listen to and hear our prayers. Be delighted with our voices lifted up to you. May you be glorified in us. Amen."
- Have someone read **Matthew 20:29 - 21:17**.

- Respond in song: "Crown Him With Many Crowns" (see next page for lyrics). You can find the song on YouTube or have someone lead it on an instrument of a cappella.

*Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne!
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but his own!
Awake, my soul and sing of Him who died for thee
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.*

*Crown Him the Lord of heaven: One with the Father known.
One with the Spirit through Him given from yonder glorious throne.
To Thee be endless praise, for Thou hast died for me;
Be Thou, O Lord, through endless days adored and magnified*

*Crown Him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save;
His glories now we sing, who died and rose on high,
Who died, eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die*

- Finish with a short prayer and follow-up with a meal or a fun dessert!

Sunday Morning: Worship Service

Begin the morning by sharing breakfast together, and ask everyone to "get dressed" for church. This act of preparation is a physical gesture that helps us to remember we are entering into worship, not just 'consuming entertainment'.

Gather together around your TV or computer to join us in our Livestream at 9:30 AM! If we do experience technical difficulties or a lack of bandwidth due to high internet traffic, we will record the service and post it online for at-home viewing.

Sunday Afternoon: Family Discussion

At lunch or afterwards, spend some time discussing the worship service. The following are some questions to prompt your discussion. Feel free to adjust these to be age appropriate. For those who are alone, consider having a discussion with others—maybe people from your Home Community—over Zoom or Skype.

*You might also consider re-reading the passage: **Matthew 20:29 - 21:17**.*

Questions:

- Describe what it might be like to be blind. How would your life be different? What would it be like to be able to see for the first time?
- What did the two blind men in the passage believe about Jesus?
- Have you ever experienced mercy? How?
- Right now is a particularly important time for us to be crying out to Jesus to show us mercy. Spend a moment speaking out some particular prayer requests that you can cry out to God together to answer: prayers for healing, for mercy, for miracles.
- Do you see Jesus as one worthy to follow? What is one way you can follow him more closely this week?

As you finish, pray together for those who are in need of God's merciful healing. Pray also that God would empower you to follow him more closely this week.