

***Liturgy of the Ordinary* by Tish Harrison Warren**

Study Guide prepared by the Congregational Life Team

Introduction to the Study Guide

What follows are chapter study guides to aid individuals and small groups in reading Tish Harrison Warren's book, *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life*. We encourage you to read Warren's delightful little book and to find yourselves in the ordinary experiences of an ordinary day.

Each chapter's study guide includes:

- A Chapter Summary
- Additional Scriptures
- Questions for Reflection and Discussion
- Prompts for Daily Living In Community
- A Practice for the week
- Prayer

Liturgy of the Ordinary draws us into an intentional reflection of the things we do every day. The truth is, if we pause to pay attention, we may discover that our *Waking*, our *Making the Bed*, our *Checking Email* and *Sitting in Traffic*, are significant moments, rich with meaning, for a life lived with and for God.

May the Lord bless you as you embark upon the adventure of discovering our extraordinary God within your "ordinary" life.

The CCPC Congregational Life Team

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 1: ***Waking—Baptism and Learning to Be Beloved***

“We are marked from our first waking moment by an identity that is given to us by grace: an identity that is deeper and more real than any other identity we will don that day” (p. 19).

"This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." Ps 118:24 [NLT]

Chapter Summary

Waking is like standing in a doorway—we are about to leave one space but not yet entered into another. What was—sleep—is no more, but we are not yet fully tuned to the frequency and requirements of the day ahead. This is a “liminal” moment: a moment of change from and to.

Waking up, truly *waking* and paying attention to our internal state and to God's presence in the moment, takes time. Instead of the metaphor of a doorway, *waking* may better be understood as a hallway. Some of us waken more slowly than others.

Spiritually, our baptism is the doorway of *waking*. The hallway of *waking* is where we begin to learn that we are deeply loved by God.

Jesus began his ministry by being baptized by John in the Jordan. As he emerged from the water, the Spirit alighted upon him and the Father's voice spoke the truth of his belovedness.

Like Jesus, we can trust our identity as God's beloved, forgiven and companioned by the Creator. Regularly remembering our baptism—that we have died with Christ and been raised to new life—is the bedrock of daily faith that helps us believe we are loved and that imbues courage and clarity for the day ahead.

Scriptures—How would these scriptures shape your *waking*? Take time to read and reflect together.

Psalm 130:1-8

Psalm 143:7-9,10

Psalm 92:1-5

Psalm 30:1-5

Psalm 59:16-17

Lamentations 3:22-26

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Read John 3:1-7. The encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus helps us frame *waking* into the context of new life in Christ that occurs even before our baptism. Remember and tell one another the story of your *waking* to your need for your Savior. Or, are you still *waking* to Christ's invitation to new life? Just like Nicodemus's inquiry to Jesus, seek out a friend who can point the way to the Lord of Life.
2. Read Matthew 3:13-17, [Mark 1:9-11](#), [Luke 3:21-22](#), and [John 1:29-34](#), the Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan. Why do you believe Jesus was baptized? What does his baptism mean to us? Consider together how our baptism and our belovedness may work together toward our *wakening* to fullness of life with God, through Christ, by the Spirit.

3. Warren writes, ". . . before you know it, before you doubt it, before you confess it, before you can sing it yourself, you are beloved by God, not by your effort but because of what Christ has done on your behalf" (p. 17). Read Ephesians 3:14-21. Take a moment to be honest with yourself. To what degree do you believe in God's unconditional love for you? Tell one another a story of when you knew without a doubt that God loves you.
4. In a typical day, what are your first conscious thoughts as you wake up? How do they shape your day and your life? How could remembering Philippians 4:8-9 turn your thoughts to God?
5. Warren writes, "We tend to want a Christian life with the dull bits cut out. . . . What if all these boring parts matter to God? What if days passed in ways that feel small and insignificant to us are weighty with meaning and part of the abundant life that God has for us?" (p. 22) What are the "dull bits" of life that you dislike or despise? Imagine together how these "dull bits" could be doorways to life with God.

In Community

What do you remember about your baptism or what have you been told about it? Share with your group the experiences of your baptism? How has your baptism affected your life and your view of God and the church?

Practice

This week, pay attention to your first waking moments. What do you do with these important, perspective-setting moments? Considering the scriptures above, select one text to pray each morning to guide you in these liminal moments.

Prayer

Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.
Christ, as a shield
overshadow me.
Christ under me;
Christ over me;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
Amen.

Taken from *Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers and Readings from the Northumbria Community*, 18-19.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 2: ***Making the Bed—Liturgy, Ritual, and What Forms a Life***

“The first activity of my day, the first move I made, was not that of a consumer, but that of a colaborer with God” (p. 28).

Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. Ps 51:15

Chapter Summary

Each of us has been formed into the individual we are today. And, moment-by-moment, we are being formed still. M. Robert Mulholland writes,

“Every thought we hold, every decision we make, every action we take, every emotion we allow to shape our behavior, every response we make to the world around us, every relationship we enter into, every reaction we have toward the things that surround us and impinge upon our lives – all of these things, little by little, are shaping us into some kind of being.”

Chapter 2 of *Liturgy of the Ordinary* focuses upon this continual shaping that is taking place in each of our lives. The habits of our lives form us. The author tells the story of choosing to make her bed, to sit for a few minutes in prayerful silence, and to banish her cell phone from these quiet moments. These new practices have become a *ritual* for beginning her day—a kind of *liturgy* for intentional slowing to pay attention to those things that give life and draw us to God, and to pay attention to those things that distract us from Him.

Warren says, “These habits and practices shape our loves, our desires, and ultimately who we are and what we worship” (p. 30).

Scriptures—Who and what we worship is a big deal to God. Read and reflect together upon these scriptures. Pray for true worship to define the Church of Christ.

John 4:19-26

Acts 17:22-31

Daniel 3:13-29

Exodus 32:1-8

Deuteronomy 5:1-8

Psalm 96:8-10

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Take time together to define, compare and contrast some important words: habit, ritual, routine, liturgy, worship, formation, transformation.
2. Acts 17:28 tells us that we all live and move and have our very existence in and through Christ. Is this what we believe? Is this how we live? What would it look like if we lived each moment knowing that it is given and enabled and purposed by Jesus?
3. We enjoy the novel, the next big thing, the exciting or controversial. However, Warren writes that, “The crucible of our formation is in the anonymous monotony of our daily routines (p. 34).” Later she writes, “It is in the repetitive and the mundane that I begin to learn to love, to listen, to pay attention to God and to those around me” (p. 36).

Do you despise or do you embrace the mundane? Consider together how your attitudes and actions might change if you knew God was present and you were being formed in the midst of the mundane.

4. What are the ways that you resist stillness, silence, and boredom? Often, fear is at the root of this resistance. Take courage. In a quiet moment, ask God to show you what fear may be empowering your resistance. Ask God to speak his love and comfort to you. Pray for one another.
5. Warren writes, “. . . much of the Christian life is returning over and over to the same work and the same habits of worship. We must contend with the same spiritual struggles again and again. The work of repentance and faith is daily and repetitive” (p. 35). Some believe that after confession and repentance a spiritual struggle should be done and gone. Reflect together: do you believe the “done and gone” view or the daily, repetitive work of repentance? Why?

In Community

Bring to your conversation some copies of the CCPC Order of Worship. Think together about the liturgy of worship at CCPC. What rituals and practices are present? What ones are absent? Become curious together to understand the purpose and intent of our thoughtfully crafted worship service.

Practice

Pay attention to your own *liturgy* of life. The author says “my unexamined daily habit (of checking her cell phone) was shaping me into a worshiper of glowing screens” (p. 31). And, “whether we examine our daily activities theologically or not, they shape our view of God and ourselves” (p. 32).

This week, take a few moments to do a review of each day. What habits and rituals reveal your priorities and values?

Prayer

A Liturgy for the Ritual of Morning Coffee

Meet me, O Christ, in this stillness of morning.
Move me, O Spirit, to quiet my heart.
Mend me, O Father, from yesterday’s harms.
From the discords of yesterday, resurrect my peace.
From the discouragements of yesterday, resurrect my hope.
From the weariness of yesterday, resurrect my strength.
From the doubts of yesterday, resurrect my faith.
From the wounds of yesterday, resurrect my love.
Let me enter this new day, aware of my need,
and awake to your grace, O Lord.
Amen.

From Douglas Kaine McKelvey, *Every Moment Holy*, Volume 1, Rabbit Room Press, 235.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide

Chapter 3: ***Brushing Teeth—Standing, Kneeling, Bowing, and Living in a Body***

“In the Scriptures we find that the body is not incidental to our faith, but integral to our worship” (p. 39).

Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. Psalm 51:15
Open my eyes that I may see the wonderful things in your law. Psalm 119:18

Chapter Summary

The world tells us that our bodies are the ultimate, that worth comes from what our bodies look like. Christianity has been accused of promoting the opposite—that the body is either to be ignored in favor of a disembodied spirit or to be denigrated as a source of evil (p. 38).

Scripture teaches a holistic view of the body. At creation, God declared human beings “very good.” Christ came as a physical body in order to redeem us in our bodies. And, in the end, we will live eternally in our resurrected body.

Warren tells us that “our bodies are sites of worship, not as an abstract idea, but through the practice of worshiping with our bodies” (p. 43). When we sing, pray, eat, raise our hands, or kneel, we are worshiping the living God bodily.

Maintenance of our bodies, “care for the body . . . is a way we honor our bodies as an act of worship” (p. 46). It is important to God that we care for these bodies that He created and will redeem in the end.

Scriptures—Our bodies are important to God. Reflect on these scriptures and consider God’s perspective of our physical bodies.

Genesis 1:26-31

Psalm 139:1-16

John 5:1-14

Romans 6:11-14

Romans 8:11

Romans 12:1-2

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What experiences have shaped your view of the body and your relationship with your own body? In what ways has your body itself helped you or led you into worship? (Recall the author’s story about praying with her body when she had no words for prayer, pp. 46-47.)
2. The author compares the misuse or rejection of our bodies to denigrating a sacred object (p. 45). Do you agree or disagree with this comparison? Why?
3. How do Jesus’ bodily resurrection and the eternal nature of our bodies shape how you think about body maintenance? How would your daily actions change if you lived your life believing that your body is sacred?

4. Warren writes, “Our bodies and souls are inseparable, and therefore what we do with our bodies and what we do with our souls are always entwined” (p. 39). Do you believe this statement is true or false? What are the implications for our lives and worship?
5. Recall Jesus’ miracles—the blind restored, the lame walked, the leper cleansed, the woman with a bleeding disorder healed, etc. With or without the assistance of medicine, what healing miracles have you experienced or heard about? What does this say about how God views the body?

In Community

Talk to a brother or sister who engages worship differently than you do. Ask them about their experience and how they came to their experience of embodied worship. Discuss together how “embodied” worship impacts your connection to God and to your community.

Practice

In your personal or corporate worship, be aware of your resistance to or desire for embodied worship. Ask the Spirit to guide you.

Prayer

Liturgy Upon Feeling the Pleasance of a Warm Shower

Thank you, O Lord,
for gifts of water and warmth,
and for the cleansing and comfort
you offer both body and soul.

In Christ.

Amen.

From Douglas Kaine McKelvey, *Every Moment Holy*, Volume 1, Rabbit Room Press, 251.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 4: ***Losing Keys—Confession and the Truth About Ourselves***

“When the day is lovely and sunny and everything is going according to plan, I can look like a pretty good person. But little things gone wrong and interrupted plans reveal who I really am; my cracks show and I see that I am profoundly in need of grace. But here’s the thing: pretty good people do not need Jesus. He came for the lost. He came for the broken. In his love for us he came to usher us into his foundness and wholeness” (p. 54).

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:10

Chapter Summary

We are often moving *fast*. Our days are under control, scheduled tightly with little margin for the unexpected. However, crazy traffic, a fender bender, a dead battery or major snowstorm exposes this “control” to be, in truth, a powerless illusion. We can easily identify with Warren’s story about her lost keys.

She leads us from the frustration of lost keys to naming the deeper realities of our hearts and souls that are of concern to the God who loves us. Warren writes, “The neediness and sinfulness, neurosis and weakness that I try to pretty up and manage through control, ease, and privilege are suddenly on display. . . . [H]ere is where I find myself on an ordinary day, and here, in my petty anger and irritation, is where the Savior deigns to meet me” (p. 53).

This chapter takes readers from frustration over thwarted control to our need for a merciful God. “These moments are an opportunity for formation, for sanctification. Underneath these overreactions and aggravations lie true fears” (p. 54) and misplaced trust in false securities and self-reliance. Warren admits, “I’d developed the habit of ignoring God in the midst of the daily grind” (p. 55).

We need honesty with ourselves and with God. Confession and repentance lead us to God’s mercy, grace and love.

Scriptures—Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. When we focus on being “pretty good people” we may be spending energy to mask that we are sinners in need of a Savior—everyday. Read and reflect together on the following scriptures.

Psalm 51

Mark 2:13-17

Philippians 4:10-19

Romans 7:14-25

James 5:13-16

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. C.S. Lewis wrote, “*We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God. The world is crowded with him. He walks everywhere incognito. And the incognito is not always hard to penetrate. The real labour is to remember, to attend. In fact, to come awake. Still more, to remain awake.*” When Harrison admits, “I’d developed the habit of ignoring God in the midst of the daily grind” (p. 55) she describes a common problem—we believe that

God has bigger concerns than my “daily grind” or that he expects me to do my daily life on my own.

Discuss together what you believe about God’s presence and availability to his people. How would life be different if we consciously did it *with* God?

2. Jesus lived his life in constant connection with his Father (Jn 10:30, 14:10, 31, Lk 10:22). Over the course of your day, how often do you acknowledge the presence of the Living God, do you seek his guidance, or do you give thanks for his goodness? Even in the midst of loss and uncertain circumstances, are you one who worships Him? Tell one another stories of discovering that God is with you in ordinary moments.
3. Harrison says that “[t]he call to contentment is a call amidst the concrete circumstances I find myself in today. I need to find joy and reject despair in the moment I’m in, in the midst of small pressures and needling anxieties” (p. 54). What do you do to embrace contentment, to find joy and to reject despair “in the moment”? Tell stories of this journey. Encourage one another to continue on.
4. The author writes, “[R]epentance and faith are the constant, daily rhythms of the Christian life, our breathing out and breathing in. . . . Repentance is not usually a moment wrought in high drama. It is the steady drumbeat of a life in Christ and, therefore, a day in Christ” (p. 56-57). To what extent do confession, repentance, and faith serve as a “steady drumbeat” of your life with Christ?

In Community

Consider together the church’s regular, corporate practice of confession and repentance and the pronouncement of forgiveness. Is this an important part of our liturgy? What do you do during silent confession? Honestly, what happens in your mind and thoughts? Share together ways and scriptures that might make silent confession increasingly meaningful.

Practice

Begin to consciously seek God’s presence throughout your ordinary day. Acknowledge Him. The contemplative practice of *Breath Prayer* (a prayerful “breathing out and breathing in” of a scripture text such as “Lord Jesus, have mercy,” etc.) is helpful to keep one’s eyes focused upon God.

Prayer

Loving God, clothe me in yourself and enable me to live and serve after the pattern of Jesus. Amen.

From *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*, Upper Room, 202.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 5: *Eating Leftovers—Word, Sacrament, and Overlooked Nourishment*

“The Eucharist—our gathered meal of thanksgiving for the life, death, and resurrection of Christ—transforms each humble meal into a moment to recall that we receive all of life, from soup to salvation, by grace” (p. 71).

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col 3:16-17

Chapter Summary

We eat every day. Sometimes we take time to make a nice meal, using vegetables from our garden and meat from a butcher. Other times we warm up leftovers or make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Whatever we eat or how long it takes to eat, this food nourishes us. Like the maintenance activities we do for our bodies, brushing teeth or showering, eating is survival and mostly, forgettable.

The most important meal we eat is the Lord’s Supper when we remember Christ and His work on the cross. But Lord’s table is spread with ordinary elements—bread and wine—food and drink that were the staples of every meal in the first century.

Just as daily food sustains us, the Word and the Sacraments sustain and nourish our souls.

Warren writes, “Christ is our bread and gives us bread. He is the gift and the giver. God gives us every meal we eat, and every meal we eat is ultimately partial and inadequate, pointing to him who is our true food, our eternal nourishment” (p. 64). Intentional gratitude for the undeserved Gift and the gracious Giver forms us into a thankful and generous people.

Scriptures—Read and reflect together upon these texts that speak of bread and nourishment for body and soul.

Matthew 4:1-11

Matthew 14:13-21

Luke 22:7-22

John 4:10-14

John 6:30-71

Ezekiel 3:1-3

Psalms 19:7-11

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Do you have a vegetable garden at your home? Do you know where your meat comes from? How does that affect your view of food in general? Do you think about the hands that grow, harvest and prepare the food you eat? Take time to pray for these anonymous individuals who serve you.
2. With an abundant meal before her, Warren admits, “I am dulled to the wonders before me. I take this nourishment for granted” (p. 68). How can we practice awareness of the gifts of abundance we enjoy everyday? Discuss together ways we can participate more intentionally in sharing our abundance and caring for those who have little.

3. In John 4 and John 6, Jesus tells his followers that he is “the living water” and “the bread of life” that satisfies our hunger and quenches our thirst. Reread and reflect on these texts and discuss their implications for our lives. Like Jesus’ first hearers, we also find that these are hard truths to understand. Ask the Spirit to enable understanding.
4. “Habits shape our desires. . . . I am either formed by the practices of the church into a worshiper who can receive all of life as a gift, or I am formed, inevitably, as a mere consumer, even a consumer of spirituality.” (p. 69). How are we formed by our habits of eating, or of consumption and commerce (including media) more generally?

In Community

Fill up the church’s food pantry this week.

Practice

Thank God for each meal you eat this week. If possible, find out where your food came from and pray for the people and place from which it came. Seek to grow in gratitude for your daily bread.

Prayer

Liturgy Upon Tasting a Pleasurable Food

For the infinite variety of your creative expression,
I praise you, O God.
You have made
even the necessary act of eating
a nurturing comfort and
a perpetual delight.
In Christ.

Amen

From Douglas Kaine McKelvey, *Every Moment Holy*, Volume 1, Rabbit Room Press, 249.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 6: ***Fighting with My Husband—
Passing the Peace and the Everyday Work of Shalom***

“Ordinary love, anonymous and unnoticed as it is, is the substance of peace on earth, the currency of God’s grace in our daily life” (p. 79).

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27

Chapter Summary

Shalom is a big word with big implications. The author defines shalom as “God’s all-consuming, all-redeeming peace” (p. 76). It’s peace that Christ died to bring us; it’s peace that God’s people are to spread in the world in response to pervasive injustice. And like Warren, we can “get caught up in big ideas of justice and truth and neglect the small opportunities around [us] to extend kindness, forgiveness, and grace” (p. 77).

God’s big idea of shalom has to begin right where we are—in our homes with our spouses, children, neighbors, friends. In relationships between children and parents and parents and children. In our churches, workplaces and in all the daily interactions of our ordinary lives.

Pursuing shalom, practicing peacemaking, rarely occurs outside of the posture of humility. Conflict, hurt, misunderstanding, and ensuing resentment may age and become stale and stifling. There is a cost to our ego when we lay down our swords and “[b]ecause we are broken people in a broken world, seeking shalom always involves forgiveness and reconciliation” (p. 85).

Passing the Peace is a part of worship, but that worship happens both inside and outside the walls of the church. God is the giver of peace. When we receive God’s gift of reconciliation for our own rebellious souls, it “enables us to give and receive reconciliation with those around us” (p. 86).

Scriptures—Read and reflect upon these scriptures that point us to God’s blessing and peace.

Numbers 6:22-27

Psalm 29:10-11

Psalm 34:11-14

Colossians 3:5-17

Matthew 5:9, 21-25

James 3:13-18

John 14:27

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers. . . .” Who do you know who is a peace-maker? What is the difference between a “peace-maker” and a “peace-keeper”? What is the goal, and the danger, of each?
2. Conflict resolution and relationship reconciliation rarely comes without humility. Read together 1Peter 3:8-9 and Phil 2:1-4. Tell stories of a time when a humble posture was key to reconciliation. This week, practice peacemaking by humbling yourself and apologizing to someone you’ve wronged.

3. Passing the Peace has been a part of the Church's liturgy since the beginning. Warren writes, "Before we come to the Eucharist, before we take the body and blood of Christ, we actively extend peace to the members of the body of Christ right around us. It's a liturgical enactment of the reality that we cannot approach the table of the Prince of Peace if we aren't at peace with our neighbor" (p. 78).

Discuss together the importance of being at peace with others before we partake of the Lord's Table. Have you ever said "no" to the bread and cup because you were in conflict with a brother or sister in Christ?

4. Read together Matthew 5:21-25. Discuss what you find there about anger and reconciliation. In what ways might anger and resentment keep us resistant to the peace that Christ died to give us?
5. Ask those closest to you how you can better love and live at peace with them. Pay attention to how you struggle to seek peace in your ordinary day. Ask God to show you the way of peace in those struggles.

In Community

When we were in Israel, people there often asked us to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Brainstorm concrete ways that we can be part of God's broader redemption of the world. Pray for peace in our homes, neighborhoods, city, state, country, and world.

Practice

Practice extending the peace of Christ to your family, friends and others. Whether in person or in prayer, practice blessing others with God's peace. "Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance." Jude 1:2

Prayer

Prayer for Courage, Hope and Peace

O God, we belong to You utterly.
You are such a Father
that You take our sins from us
and throw them behind Your back.

You clean our souls,
as Your Son washed our feet.
We hold up our hearts to You:
make them what they must be.
Amen.

From *Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers and Readings from the Northumbria Community*, 296.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 7: **Checking Email—Blessing and Sending**

“The work we do together each week in gathered worship transforms and sends us into the work we do in our homes and offices. Likewise, our professional and vocational work is part of the mission and meaning of our gathered worship. We are people who are blessed and sent; this identity transforms how we embody work and worship in the world, in our week, even in our small day” (p. 90).

Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it. Genesis 28:16

Chapter Summary

“What does worship have to do with my work?” (p. 90)

Worship and work are partners; prayer is work and work is prayer. “The Reformers taught that a farmer may worship God by being a good farmer and that a parent changing diapers could be as near to Jesus as the pope. This was a scandal” (p. 90).

But, when we find our primary purpose in life in and through our work, we may become imbalanced. Warren says, “. . . we are sent into a culture where work can become all-consuming and boundless. . . . and productivity an idol to which we’ll sacrifice rest, health, and relationships” (p. 98). We may agree to culture’s mantra of endless work or we may seek to escape from the “workaday world.”

Warren suggests “a third way—neither frantic activity nor escape from the workaday world, a way of working that is shaped by being blessed and sent. This third way is marked by freedom from compulsion and anxiety because it is rooted in benediction—God’s blessing and love. But it also actively embraces God’s mission in the world into which we are sent” (p. 99).

“Living a third way of work—where we seek vocational holiness in and through our work even as we resist the idolatry of work and accomplishment—allows us to live with work as a form of prayer” (pp. 100-101).

Scriptures—Read and reflect upon these scriptures about our work and God’s blessing.

Genesis 2:15

Psalm 90:17

Colossians 3:16-17

Colossians 3:23

Genesis 28:10-22

Numbers 6:22-27

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. *“What does worship have to do with my work?” (p. 90)* The Faith and Work conversation that is flourishing in recent years comes as a response to a common belief that our work in the marketplace, or at home, is “secular” while our “spiritual” work happens during a quiet time or a corporate worship time. Discuss what you have experienced of this secular/sacred divide. If you believe that all of life is sacred, is there a difference between what you believe and how you live?
2. The author writes, “There is no competition between the work we do as a people in gathered worship . . . and our vocations in the world. For believers, the two are

intrinsically part of one another” (p. 89). How do you see your work life and your worship entwined? How do they influence and shape each other?

3. At the close of worship together, we are blessed and sent to “Go and serve the Lord.” How might your identity as one “blessed and sent” change your life and work in the world?
4. Is your work life out of balance with other spheres of your life? If so, consider why this is the case? What are the deeper reasons behind this choice?

In Community

During the week, watch for opportunities to remind each other that you are “blessed and sent” ones. Pray a blessing over one another as you seek to “pray and work” and “work and pray.”

Practice

Prayerfully invite God to teach you to approach your work tasks as prayers. Ask God to enable you to be in your work, yet on your knees.

Prayer

A Prayer of the Breton fishermen

Dear God,
 be good to me.
The sea is so wide
 and my boat is so small.
Amen.

Taken from *Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers and Readings from the Northumbria Community*, 748.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 8: *Sitting in Traffic—Liturgical Time and an Unhurried God*

“Christians are people who wait. We live in liminal time, in the already and not yet. Christ has come, and he will come again. We dwell in the meantime. We wait. But in my daily life I’ve developed habits of impatience—of speeding ahead, of trying to squeeze more into my cluttered day” (p. 104).

Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. James 5:7-8

Chapter Summary

Waiting is an unavoidable part of life. We wait for big things and small things. For the coffee to brew, for the doctor to call, for school to start, for retirement, for a return email or text, for a child to be born, for a parent to die. And as Christians, we wait for the Lord to return.

Sadly, as Warren reminds us, “We are impatient people” (p. 107). We try to control time by managing our calendars and cramming as much activity into our days as possible. Ultimately, God controls time and not we ourselves. God knows that in the waiting we grow.

The church follows a liturgical calendar, marking time by Christ’s story. Advent to Christmas to Epiphany. Lent to Easter to Pentecost. All the while, we look toward the end of the story when Christ returns. “Waiting, therefore, is an act of faith in that it is oriented toward the future” (p. 108). Following the liturgical calendar turns our focus to the bigger picture of life lived under the rule and reign of Christ. It slows us down and gives us a more intentional and eternal structure for our days and years with God.

We wait for the future while we live solidly grounded in the present. In our daily present, we pray “Your kingdom come” even as we seek to bring a foretaste of that kingdom. Extending God’s compassion and healing to the brokenness and injustice around us means we are living as God’s kingdom people.

“Our hope for a future of shalom motivates us to press toward that reality,” (p.113) the reality that God will bring about His kingdom on earth. In the meantime, we wait.

Scriptures—As impatient people it is easy to forget that God is Creator of time and his timing of all things is perfect. Read and reflect on these scriptures.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-14

Romans 8:18-27

Psalm 37:5-9

Psalm 130:1-8

Isaiah 40:27-31

James 5:7-11

Revelation 21:9-27

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What response does waiting stir up in you? What underlying expectations are being frustrated by having to wait?
2. Warren tells us of an artist friend whose painting contained a keyhole, which she titled “The Gift” (p. 110-111). Do you find waiting or not knowing what’s coming next to be a gift? In our waiting, there is always more happening beneath the surface. Consider together what those things could be. In what ways could these be a gift? Make a list.

3. In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S Lewis wrote, "If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world." Have you ever had a desire that made you long for heaven? Share with each other what those desires are and a story of when they seemed most acute. How would life be different if we lived in recognition that our deepest desires will be met ultimately in His kingdom come?
4. We have school calendars, Hallmark holiday calendars, sports calendars, seasonal calendars, consumer calendars, a liturgical calendar, and more. What calendars do you live by? How do they compete with each other?

In Community

CCPC follows the liturgical calendar. How does the liturgical calendar shape and form our corporate worship and our corporate view of time? Has the rhythm of the liturgical year ever formed the boundaries of your devotional life? Discuss how you might engage the liturgical calendar together.

Practice

God holds time in his hands. Give thanks for His gift of time. Seek to do the moments and hours of your days as co-laborer with Him. When you have to wait, put away your smartphone. Notice your thoughts, emotions and the surprise gifts He brings. When frustration or irritation arise, pay attention and invite God into these emotions.

Prayer

A Liturgy for Waiting in Line

Decrease my unrighteous impatience,
directed at circumstances and people.
Increase instead my righteous longing
for the moment of your return,
when all creation will be liberated
from every futility in which it now languishes.

Be present in my waiting, O Lord,
that I might also be present in it
as a Christ-bearer to those before and behind me,
who also wait.

As I am a vessel, let me not be like a sodden
paper cup full of steaming frustration, carelessly
sloshing unpleasantness on those around me.

Rather let me be like a communion chalice,
reflecting the silvered beauty of your light,
brimming with an offered grace.

Amen.

From Douglas Kaine McKelvey, *Every Moment Holy*, Volume 1, Rabbit Room Press, 255.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 9: **Calling a Friend—Congregation and Community**

“We are drawn to those we find lovely and likable. Yet those Jesus spent his time among—and those most drawn to Jesus—were the odd, the disheveled, and the outcast. Those who were winning at life saw no need for this life-disrupting Savior. The people of God are the losers, misfits, and broken. This is good news—and humiliating. God loves and delights in the people in the pews around me and dares me to find beauty in them” (p. 125).

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. . . . We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. 1John 4:16b, 19-21

Chapter Summary

Your presence, and your absence, matters to everyone in the room. We are better together; we need each other.

Individuals who profess Christ as Savior and Lord make up the Church initiated and established by Jesus. Warren writes, “For a couple of centuries now, evangelicals have focused almost exclusively on a personal relationship with God, on individual conversion and spiritual growth. . . . But while an individual relationship with Jesus is an important part of the Christian life, it is not the sum total of the Christian life. Our relationship with God is never less than an intimate relationship with Christ, but it is always more than that” (p. 118). Individuals make up congregations. Congregations make up communities. Communities make up a global fellowship and witness of God’s work of salvation in history, in the present, and in the future.

The Church is a global and historical reality, a community that spans miles and millenia. What we know of Jesus’ life and ministry in first century Israel, we owe to faithful and passionate storytellers whose lives were transformed by a healing touch or a compassionate word. These changed-ones observed God’s son and our Savior, and, inspired by the Spirit, they passed on the Good News by spoken and written word.

We are connected to these first witnesses and storytellers. We share their call to pass on what they passed on to us. “We do not know this Messiah solely through the red letters in the gospel texts. We know him in his fullness because we are joined to him in his Body, the church. In this joining, we do not lose our individuality or our individual stories of conversion and encounter with Christ. Instead, our own small stories are wrapped up in the story of all believers throughout time, which are together part of the eternal story of Christ” (p. 121).

Scriptures

James 5:13-20

Philemon 1:4-7

Acts 2:42-47

Romans 12:3-21

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

1 Peter 2:9-10

Hebrews 10:19-25

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. We all need a soul friend who speaks words of life into our hearts and circumstances. Warren writes, “My best friendships are with people who are willing to get in the muck with me, who see me as I am, and who speak to me of our hope in Christ in the midst of it. . . . [W]e hold up the experiences of our lives to the Word of truth” (p. 117). Take time to remember some of these soul friends from over the years. Give thanks and lift them to the Father. Who do you serve as a soul friend now? Who serves you?
2. “We profoundly need each other. We are immersed in the Christian life together. There is no merely private faith—everything we are and do as individuals affects the church community” (p. 120). Discuss together private versus shared faith. Does private faith encourage others or increase community? What are the implications of a private faith that secretly embraces sin? Does that sin really affect the church as a whole?
3. “Sin in the church can be insidious and systemic. We can be injured by a misuse of power or entrenched in institutional pathology. Any of us who have hung around the church long enough have a few scars to show” (p. 121-122). When have you been wounded by sin in the church? Did it make you cynical and cautious? What lessons have you learned as a result? Pray for one another.
4. Consider together the witness of the Church in the world. Where in the world do you see a witness that encourages the church as a whole and draws others to the name of Jesus? Where in the world do you see a witness that brings shame on Jesus’ name and makes the message of Christ something that can be dismissed? Pray for these people and situations.

In Community

Spend time together lifting the church congregation to the Father. Pray for the people, the pastors, leaders and elders that the love of Christ would be evident among us and through us. Name the churches in the area. Pray for their leadership and their people that their witness in the community might “shine like stars.”

Practice

Call, text, email or visit a friend. Speak words of encouragement and hope.

Prayer

Almighty God, you have called the church into being and have gathered us into one family. By the power of your Holy Spirit help us to live in unity and peace with all of your children. May our actions this day be fruit of our faith in your kingdom. In the name of Christ. Amen.

From A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants, Upper Room, 190.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 10: *Drinking Tea—Sanctuary and Savoring*

“My body, this tea, and the quiet twilight are teaching me God’s goodness through my senses. I’m tasting, hearing, feeling, seeing, and smelling that God is good. Pleasure is our deep human response to an encounter with beauty and goodness” (p. 128-129).

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. Psalm 34:8

Chapter Summary

We live in a pleasure pursuing culture. “Our culture’s relationship with pleasure is complex. On one hand, we seem obsessed with pleasure. We overindulge and overeat. We are addicted to amusement and are overwhelmed. . . . greed and consumerism dull our delight. . . . but we are never sated. . . . Pragmatism, another powerful cultural force, can denigrate our desire for beauty and enjoyment. . . . Workaholism and constant connectivity fight against our ability to be present to the pleasure of the moment” (p. 130).

From the first words of Genesis to the last words of Revelation, God’s people find countless reasons to celebrate. We rejoice over God’s covenant faithfulness, his mercy toward his rebellious people, and his undeserved favor and extravagant love extended to us through Christ Jesus, the Son. Warren reminds us, “A culture formed by the gospel will honor good and right enjoyment, celebration, and sensuousness” (p. 131).

Creation is God’s textbook on beauty. Psalm 19 tells us that “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. . . .” And, the lilies of the field are more spectacular than Solomon’s splendor (Mt 6). God invites us to revel, with childlike wonder and delight, in the beauty of yet another sunrise. “When we enjoy God’s creation, we reflect God himself” (p. 131). But “[a]s busy, practical, hurried, and distracted people, we develop habits of inattention and miss these tiny theophanies in our day. But if we were fully alive and whole, no pleasure would be too ordinary or commonplace to stir up adoration” (p. 135).

“The word *sanctuary* refers to a holy place but, because churches were once places of legal asylum, the term has also come to mean a place of shelter, a haven, or a refuge” (p. 134). The *sanctuary* is a room where we worship on a Sunday morning and *sanctuary* is found in small, sacred moments when we savor the goodness of God in our ordinary day. This *sanctuary* may be a refuge for the body (a nap), the mind (a good book), or the soul (prayerful, listening stillness).

Scriptures—Read and reflect on these scriptures that speak of celebrating the goodness of God.

James 1:16-18
Psalm 23:6
Psalm 34:8
Psalm 145:1-21

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Warren says that the *sanctuary* where we worship trains us to find moments of *sanctuary* in our daily lives. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Personally, where do you find a haven and refuge for your body, mind and soul? What are you doing when the small moments of refuge come to you?

2. “Christians are singing people. From ancient monks chanting the Psalms to Wesleyan hymnody, music has always been a way for the church to hone its theology and practice prayer with artistry and beauty” (p. 132). Discuss together what role music plays in your own worship and understanding of God. How has music shaped your theology?
3. We become more fully alive when we savor God’s beauty around and within us. How do you celebrate the wonder of the world around you? Is it difficult for you to take a moment to exhale and breathe in beauty? What common, tangible thing brings you pleasure and helps you celebrate the goodness of God (eg., sitting in front of the fire, drinking coffee, going for a walk, etc.)? What experience helps you slow down and savor?
4. “Enjoyment requires discernment. As we learn to practice enjoyment, we need to learn the craft of discernment—how to enjoy rightly, to “have” and “read” pleasure well” (p. 138). It’s easy to go overboard on a pleasure. Too much wine or too many episodes of a favorite show—too much of any good thing turns a restful joy into a sour escape. When have you wished you’d gone to bed sooner? Eaten just one instead of two? Discuss together the need for discernment. Does accountability help? What if even the pleasure and enjoyment were surrendered, in real time, to “Christ with us”?

In Community

Each season of the liturgical year has a particular color and look. Christmas is rich and extravagant while Lent is sparse. Do you notice the preparation of the sanctuary for each season and each service? Name as many things as you can in our sanctuary and discuss how they do or do not lead you in worship. Discuss together the possible meanings behind the sanctuary preparations.

Practice

Throughout the ages, stained glass art was the way preliterate people learned God’s story of salvation in Christ. When you come for worship, rest your eyes upon the stained glass windows. Rehearse the story told there. Allow God to draw you to a particular window and the story of salvation for you in that moment. Give thanks.

Prayer

From A Liturgy for Sunsets

May the patterns of your eternal beauties be fixed in our souls, O Lord.
 That the lives we lead and the words we speak
 might hereafter be infused with a grace
 that would show forth your beauty.
 May your people be as winsome as the sunset,
 O God, and give as little cause for offense,
 as they carry your name, your truth, and your love into this world.
 Our hearts and our lives are your canvas, O Spirit of God.
 We yield them to you.
 Go forth, you image bearers of God.
 Go forth bearing his image and sharing his beauty.
 Amen.

Liturgy of the Ordinary Study Guide
Chapter 11: ***Sleeping—Sabbath, Rest, and the Work of God***

As believers we can relish sleep as not only necessary but as an embodied response to the truth of Scripture: we are finite, weak creatures who are abundantly cared for by our strong and loving Creator” (p. 152).

It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Psalm 127:2

Chapter Summary

When our days were boundaried by the rising and setting of the sun, the rhythm of work and rest flowed naturally. But with the advent of electricity, the internet and the smartphone, night is the same as day and productivity rules. The boundaries given to us by God can be resisted and finitude and limits can be dismissed. We can keep going until we drop! But our bodies require rest. “Our bodily limits are our chief daily reminder that we are but dust. We inhabit a frail, vulnerable humanity. And we hate being reminded” (p. 146).

Self-sufficiency and self-reliance are engines of the American dream. However, “We are not sufficient; we need a caretaker. And this must affect our bodily routines, our worship, and our view of God. Our culture of restlessness and limitlessness has not only affected our bodies. It has shaped our faith. As Americans and as evangelicals, the subtle idea that our relationship with God relies on our own efforts and energy is part of our DNA. The idea that our bodies don’t matter and that limits are simply obstacles to be overcome misshapes our understanding of worship and mission” (p. 147-148).

“There is a profound connection between the sleep we get in our beds each night and the sacramental rest we know each Sunday in our gathered worship” (p. 141). While we sleep, God is at work forming and transforming his people, and accomplishing his work in the world, his world. “If it is hard for us to believe that God is at work in us and in the world even while we sleep, it reveals who we truly think is the mover and maker of our lives and spiritual health. . . . This is the heart of worship—both our gathered worship on Sundays and worship in our ordinary days. As children beloved and pleasing to God, we join in with what God has already begun. We join in his work in and through his church” (p. 151).

“Each night when we yield to sleep, we practice letting go of our reliance on self-effort and abiding in the good grace of our Creator. Thus embracing sleep is not only a confession of our limits; it is also a joyful confession of God’s limitless care for us. For Christians, the act of ceasing and relaxing into sleep is an act of reliance on God” (p. 152).

Scriptures

Genesis 2:2-3
Exodus 35:2
Psalm 3:1-6
Heb 4:9-16
Psalm 127:1-2

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Warren writes, “Rest takes practice. . . . If rest is learned through habit and repetition, so is restlessness. These habits of rest or restlessness form us over time” (p. 141). Have you ever known someone who said they needed just three or four hours of sleep each night? Talk together about “habits of rest or restlessness.” What might be some deeper reasons for restlessness?
2. The scripture is clear about God’s desire that we rest on the seventh day. Do you regularly take a Sabbath? If not, why? If you take a Sabbath, discuss the contours of your commitment and practice of Sabbath rest.
3. “Our sleep habits both reveal and shape our loves. A decent indicator of what we love is that for which we willingly give up sleep. . . . My disordered sleep reveals a disordered love, idols of entertainment or productivity. . . . The truth is, I’m far more likely to give up sleep for entertainment than I am for prayer” (p. 142-143). For whom or for what are you willing to give up sleep? Do you see anything “disordered” in this willingness? How does anxiety and worry about the cares of life become a disordered love that robs us of rest?
4. Read the first full paragraph on p. 142—”The liturgy of my night. . . .” Discuss together the rhythm of your nighttime liturgy. Share ways that you quiet and surrender yourself to God’s care.

In Community

“What if Christians were known as a countercultural community of the well-rested—people who embrace our limits with zest and even joy?” (p. 152) Brainstorm together the implications of “well-rested” followers of Jesus on mission for God. What damage do worn-out Jesus-followers do in the world?

Practice

Covenant with God and another person to seek to be a well-rested Christ-follower and God-worshiper.

Prayer

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping;
that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep we may rest in peace.
Amen.

From *Book of Common Prayer*, 134.