



NAC-USA  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

Your will be  
done...

Waiting and  
Trusting

# PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Walking in  
the Spirit

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**2015**

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May

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## Going Deeper

### Prayer

Of all the Christian spiritual disciplines, prayer is perhaps the most universal and most practiced. We pray consciously and unconsciously. We formalize and ritualize our prayers, from the simplest mealtime blessings and bedtime petitions we learn as children to the repetition of the Lord's Prayer in corporate worship. To some, prayer is a disciplined time set aside each day for meditation and reflection; to others, prayer is unrehearsed words uttered throughout the day in moments of joy or crisis. Prayer can simply be an abiding sense of the presence of God.

We discover through persistent prayer that prayer is not so much communication with God as communion with God. It is through the spiritual wrestling of prayer that we come to know the mystery of God's being and presence. Jesus teaches us that prayer ultimately leads us into a deeper relationship with God, in whose goodness we can trust. Through prayer we receive a greater peace about situations beyond our control and a more profound confidence in God's providence, even when we cannot yet see the answer to our prayers.

- Lewis F. Galloway,  
Feasting on the Gospels

So how do we use Jesus' prayer as our guide?

Step one is to **know the will of God**. What does God want me to do? Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us that *"as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."* As we pray to our Father in heaven, let's ask that we become more familiar with His ways and thoughts.

**Embrace the will of God.** He loves us and has given us the freedom to love Him in return, to trust Him and to serve Him. Of our own free will, we may choose to walk on His pathway to eternal life. In essence, we do not give up our will, rather we decide to make God's will our own.

When we choose God's pathway we give up all the other pathways that are available to us. Part of the cost is **accepting the struggle** of the pathway itself.

Jesus' life is the perfect example of these three steps. He understood His Father's love for fallen mankind and His desire to save us. He willingly chose to be the outlet for God's love and the means for our salvation. In the Garden of Gethsemane we see Jesus the man struggle with the price of His decision to do God's will.

Like Christ, we may ask God to make our path easier, but our chief prayer is for the grace and strength to bear it. No matter what, we want to embrace the mission God has given us. Loving God doesn't always mean that we like His plan for us; it does mean that we choose to accept it.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss what the phrase, *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* means to you today. Compare that with your understanding 10 years ago.

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2. Realistically, what do you imagine God's will is for "heaven on earth?" What do you imagine are the characteristics of the heavenly kingdom that is to come? How does the kingdom on earth prepare us for the heavenly kingdom?

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## Bible References

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### 1 Timothy 2:3-4

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

### Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

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## Going Deeper

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### The meaning of it...

It is our Lord's Prayer, it is of His composing, of His appointing; it is very compendious, yet very comprehensive, in compassion to our infirmities in praying. The matter is choice and necessary, the method instructive, and the expression very concise. It has much in a little, and it is requisite that we acquaint ourselves with the sense and meaning of it, for it is used acceptably no further than it is used with understanding and without vain repetition.

– Matthew Henry, commentary

3. Think back on your day today. If someone was watching you, would they see the kingdom? Look at it this way: who have you served today and who have you disappointed today?

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4. Read Isaiah 55:8-9. Discuss how you can come closer to grasping God's ways and thoughts.

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5. Read 1 Timothy 2:3-4 and discuss how the verses tell us something about God's will. How does this affect your actions?

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6. What are you passionate about? **From the video:** *Of our own free will, we may choose to walk on His pathway to eternal life. In essence, we do not give up our will, rather we decide to make God's will our own. This decision can be joyous and passionate.* How is accepting God's will passionate?

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7. Discuss what Hebrews 4:15 means to you. Take a few minutes individually and think about a particular weakness that you struggle with. Write a short prayer asking Christ for strength in your struggle between God's will and your will.

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## Bible References

### Psalm 73: 2-17

But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. Therefore his people return here, and waters of a full cup are drained by them. And they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease; they increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.

### Psalm 37:7

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

- Illness and death
- Problems at school, such as failing a test
- Stress at work, to the point that we are unable to do our job
- Disappointment with our partner in life; breakups and failures of marriages and families
- Feeling rejected and unloved, maybe even in the congregation.

Worse yet, sometimes it seems that people who do not care about godly things have a better, easier life than we have. (Psalm 73:2-14)

In all of these circumstances we must make a decision. We can choose to let our trust in God and His promises become weak, or we can do what we read in Psalm 37:7 – *wait patiently for Him*.

Our ability to remain patient is strengthened when we come together in two kinds of ways:

- In the divine services when we receive the Spirit-inspired word and Holy Communion, our faith and trust in God are strengthened.
- When we gather to discuss matters of faith, the Holy Spirit can work among us and provide comfort, guidance and encouragement.

John 14:16-18 *"And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."*

### Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss what the words "waiting" and "trusting" mean to you.

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2. How have you experienced the blessing of waiting and trusting? How have you experienced the unpleasantness of waiting and trusting?

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## Biblical Promises

**Revelation 21:4** He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

**Jeremiah 29:11** "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

**2 Corinthians 6:18** I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.

**John 16:22** Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

**Luke 1:37** For no word from God will ever fail.

**Ezekiel 11:19-20** I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

**John 6:37** All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

**John 6:40** And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

**Haggai 2:9** 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

**Psalms 50:15** Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

3. Consider the Bible verses to the left (or share one of your own). How has the promise of that word been fulfilled in your life?

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4. Share a time when your trust in God came under serious attack by your life circumstances. What helped you return to trusting in God?

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5. What happens when our patience and trust fail?

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6. What can/should we do when we see the patience and trust of a fellow Christian fail?

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7. Why do you think our Heavenly Father allows us to experience difficulties in life?

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## NAC Catechism

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### 12.1.1

#### General remarks concerning divine service

In the divine service the congregation gathers to hear God's word and receive blessing through the sacrament. Human beings worship God in reverence and humbleness.

Thus divine service is an encounter between God and man. In the worshipful serving of the believers and in the perceptible presence of the triune God, the congregation experiences that God serves them in love.

### 12.1.5

#### Divine service as an encounter with God (excerpt)

The four elements of divine service present in the early church are still today among the definitive characteristics present when the congregation experiences the mystery of an encounter between God and man at the altar, which is always new.

8. Please discuss these two ideas:

a. A synonym of patience is to be forgiving (patience with my fellow man)

b. Another synonym of patience is humility (patience with God's plan)

c. Consider the importance of patience in our *Christian relationships* – i.e. the relationship with our neighbor and the relationship with God.

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9. How do you feel when you experience what is referred to in Psalm 73:2-14? Consider these verses in light of verse 17.

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10. Discuss times when you have experienced the activity of the Spirit in...

a. The divine services

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b. When we gather to discuss matters of faith:

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11. What can we do to 'make room' for the Holy Spirit within us and in our lives?

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## Session 3: Walking in the Spirit

Start the discussion with these questions reflecting on the Chief Apostle's Pentecost service.

### Bible References

#### Revelation 22: 17

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

#### BIBLE READINGS

#### Joel 2: 28–29

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

#### Ephesians 3: 14–21

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

### Pentecost Discussion Questions:

1. What was the most impactful part of the service for you?

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2. What were some main points that the Chief Apostle made in the Pentecost service?

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3. What should the implications of the Pentecost service be for your personal life and congregational life?

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By choosing to walk in the Spirit:

- We make an intentional decision to live a life of fellowship with God and the assembly of believers.
- We make the decision to listen to God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to use that Word to change our nature into that of Jesus.
- We love our neighbors and reflect Jesus' love for all people.
- We proclaim the Gospel to our fellow man.
- We desire and work for peace.

We all play a role in the mission of the church and we fulfill that calling by engaging in a relationship with the Holy Spirit, and utilizing the gifts God has given us. He will provide you and me with the power we need each step of our walk.

## Bible References

### Joel 2:28

And it shall come to pass afterward, That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

### John 14: 16-18

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

### Galatians 5:22-25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Read Joel 2:28 and John 14:16-18. Discuss the importance of these promises about the Holy Spirit to the disciples.

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2. Jesus has given us each a calling for our lives. What does the Holy Spirit provide us with to fulfill this calling?

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